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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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"BUT WHEN SHE CAME, ALL ELSE IN THE WORLD
TOOK SECOND PLACE."—Page 27.

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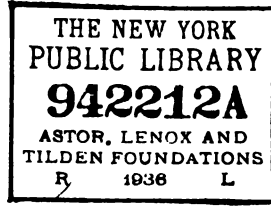
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To
MALCOLM COMAN MITCHELL,
My Friend.

Johnson 23 Nov 1935

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

WITH an eye to the remote chance that some reader of the present story knows of a little book printed in paper covers in 1885 under the title of "The Autobiography of an Old Sport," the author seizes upon the liberty of a foreword to declare the fact that the anonymousness of that simple effort covers his handiwork. The preparation of that character sketch was his contribution to a friendly undertaking having for its object the deliverance of the old man who was the hero of the narrative from the veritable pangs of want. Inasmuch as the publication, sold from the overcoat pocket of "the old sport," served to lift the last months of his life out of the shadows into the sun, and finally to lay what was mortal of him under a modest stone, its original and worthiest design was happily fulfilled. Its drolleries, its oddities, its anecdotal tidbits—transcripts from the everyday speech of a Yorick in the flesh—were bound to be marked for possible employment in a work of fiction, and for that use

at an opportune future were they reserved. Now, after fifteen years' seasoning, such part of the narrative as seemed available for more presumptuous exploitation has been put between these covers, excised, modified, and elaborated to the present purposes. If of the two or three hundred copies originally circulated there be now a stray example, its owner will be able better to note where truth ends and fiction begins in this story; for aside from resort to "The Autobiography of an Old Sport," there is a grain of truth herein—as for example, the essential facts regarding the origin and discovery of the Cardiff Giant. The author believes, in fact, that in no other form is to be found the true history of that most audacious of humbugs. Keen delight has been taken in here unmasking it. The giant, it must not be forgotten, was an American. Its ill-fame is a blot on our national honour. There may be those among our critics who still contend that it is a symbol of our national spirit. To confound such as these it has been attempted in the following pages to set forth a man of flesh and blood, as rough hewn as the Cardiff Giant, but a man, worthy to be called "natural born"—that happy, though little used, description of the native American to be found only in the fifth section of

Article II of the federal Constitution wherein are defined the qualifications of those citizens who are eligible to hold the office of President of the United States.

The author is aware that to have written a story of Central New York is to have awakened the ghost of "David Harum"—a kindly apparition in this instance, however, for the author has but to listen with his memory to hear from the tomb of Edward Noyes Westcott the gentle words that perhaps earlier than any others encouraged a task, many times laid aside, and now completed. By the quaint veracities of "The Autobiography of an Old Sport" Mr. Westcott was quickly struck, and to him they appealed as useful elements in the imaginative tale the author thereupon set himself the task to write. Its eventual execution is, therefore, due more to the generous influence of the man living than to the achieved success of the novelist dead.

C. R. S.

“Your Uncle Lew.”

CHAPTER I.

AT THE EATING-HOUSE.

THIS much could be said of Lewis Dunbar, whatever arraignment running counter thereto was brought by those who missed the best that was in the man: Lewis Dunbar was no fool. What is here told goes to prove it, or the purpose of the tale signally fails. Toward the very end of his life Dunbar had something to say aptly illustrating his profound objection to the lack of common sense, which deficiency in a man's mental equipment, according to his crude philosophy, constituted being a natural-born fool. Fool was not his word, of course.

“There's a sucker born every minute,” he sententiously remarked, “and statistics prove they die at the rate of one a year.”

Dunbar had been driving a sharp bargain that day, and was glorying in the net result. He was not a man to mince matters. When he got the best of a trade *he* never went off into a corner to gloat. He liked to let every one at hand share his elation. It was the fashion in his day (as it is now) to mark a triumph of wit or of skill, or a domestic epoch for that matter, by resort to bibulous exhilaration ; but while Lewis Dunbar observed these usages of the life he led, it was not in this he excelled. People who recalled how the wine flowed when his daughter was born, thought of it *only* as an incident of a period of personal luminosity, in which a proud parent made it appear he had achieved something that stood to be recorded for all time as a marvel among marvels. Scores of strong men, who were fathers themselves, were so beguiled by the illusion that they affirmed as true, undeniably true, Dunbar's greatness in paternity, and drained the flowing bowl in recognition of it.

It may be, as some said, that Dunbar was boastful ; but then he was frankness itself. When he wanted to buy a horse—and if he set his eye on a beast, it was as good as his from the start—he said so. He went where it was to see it and admire it.

“ Man a-live,” he said in such a case, “ I want the

horse or I don't want it. If it's a pelter count me out. But if it suits me you've got me on the run. If the horse suits you what's the good of sayin' it's not big enough, or its tail's too short, or its colour too light, or its action too slow, or—tellin' a lie about it anyway? What's the use? The horse *I* like, I *like*. I hurry to tell the man so: 'There's the very horse I've been lookin' for. Hear me! Just right as to size—how many hands high is the mare?—Never saw a finer coat of hair on four feet. She steps off like the Queen of Sheba. Dollars to doughnuts she's got speed con-cealed about her person. And such a kind eye! She's all right. How much?' That's the way I go at it. Then says the owner, so much money. 'Too much,' I say, 'and I'm broken-hearted about it. I'd give so much, but your figure's too steep.' 'I've touched bottom,' says the man. 'Sorry,' says I, 'for I have taken a fancy to that mare. You're not askin' a cent too much for her—I'd ask as much if she was mine—but she's too high-priced for your Uncle Lew.' And off I starts. Ten to one he hollers at me afore I'm out of the smell of the sweet clover in his loft to come and take her at my price."

It was, indeed, a rule of Dunbar's life to buy things at his price. A good rule, too, you will say.

So it happens that at the time when we are to look in on him day by day as he journeys along, Lewis Dunbar was a man well-to-do in this world. Well-to-do in this instance meant that he was able without scrimping himself to have and keep horses to his fastidious liking. Men were rich or poor in those days (say thirty and forty years ago) according to their financial ability to indulge the love of horse-flesh—a love that is inherent in most of us.

In all the State of New York there was not a city of better promise than the one in which he settled down for good and all to turn over his honest pennies. Everybody who came to Salina, either by canal packet or railroad car, was saying so, and Dunbar found little trouble in agreeing with the prevalent opinion. He knew, too, what he was talking about, for in his time he had traced the map of the country to some of its confines with the sharp pencil of actual contact.

Native to the soil, Lewis Dunbar, before he had gone to wander on the face of earth, had gained renown in Salina as a man of quaint speech, a wit in fact, whose ready tongue was never at a loss for a happy rejoinder, or whose verbal resources ever fell short of a great occasion. They used to tell—the men who were old citizens then—how as a

youthful hackman he stood guard at the depot awaiting the arrival of trains, and when engaged to drive a passenger to any one of the three or four inns of the town—all within a stone's throw of the depot, but out of view in its shadow—he would whisk his team three or four times around the neighbouring blocks, and deliver his passenger at the Salina House, the St. Charles Hotel, or the Coffee House, with an abject apology for the roughness of the cobbles.

"There's talk," he would say, "of puttin' up a tavern nearer the depot, and I guess it 'ould pay, too, though we hackmen would get the worst end on it—you can see that?"

The next train in or out of Salina, puffing and snorting almost under the very eaves of the hotel, would set the newcomer marvelling how this could be done without erecting the building on the track itself.

There were current on the popular tongue scores of quotations, characteristic of his verbal alacrity, which every one in Salina knew by heart as having originated with Lewis Dunbar. The younger men of the town, those who were just then giving it spice, had had these things from their elders, and as a consequence were quite prepared, when he

"came home to roost" as he put it, to test his quality on their own account.

Is it a wonder, then, that when Dunbar established himself in an eating-house hard by the depot, his old stamping ground, the jolly young set did not wait for the gnawing of hunger to take them to his door? It was such a welcome as so good a soul deserved that Dunbar received. It was in a way personal magnetism that effected this, although the nicer eaters among the throngs were not long in discovering that Dunbar's gifts of genius included a culinary intelligence of a high order. He was a famous cook. Everybody who broke bread under his roof did not know this—most people munch and chew in total ignorance of the genuine delights of eating—but for those who liked to feast something in the manner of Lucullus, Lewis Dunbar was a noble host. A confirmed gourmet himself, Dunbar took no keener pleasure than in leading appreciative friends along the same paths of delight.

"You live high, old friend," said a customer who dropped in one day to find the genial Boniface dividing with dexterous stroke a plump partridge, cooked to a turn, and garnished to suit a prince.

"High, my boy," replied Dunbar, "high? The

a-roma from my kitchen would break Queen Victoria's heart."

There were wonderful nights in Dunbar's company, beside his hospitable board, after the last trains had come in; and it is into the full swing of one of these it is here and now proposed to introduce the reader without further ado.

First of all, whom have we here? Through the lifting smoke belching in snowy volumes from how many rolls and pipesful of tobacco Heaven could not tell, there came down the narrow room, over the rows of long tables at which Dunbar's patrons were fed ("They don't eat," he said, "we jest feed 'em.") the gleam of precious stones. As closer examination revealed, this sunburst proceeded from a cluster of diamonds set in the form of a cross, a design then much in vogue. This array was borne on the ruffled expanse of shirt front of him of whom this story is being told. "The crown jewels," Dunbar called them, in fanciful reverence for their value, and as the token, too, of his achieved independence of fortune. You could not look Lewis Dunbar full in the face without first blinking your eyes at his adornment. Once accustomed to the glare, especially when softened by the smoky clouds enveloping him, you saw that the man thus em-

blazoned was standing at good height in his stockings, and wore an air of what may be called easy clumsiness. Did he stand in his stockings? More properly he stood in his boots, high-top boots, into which his trousers were loosely thrust, as if he had just come in from the barn-yard. His boots and a tall white beaver hat made him a marked man. This hat, even then old-fashioned, he wore invariably tilted on one side like a listed mast, its angle being matched, as a rule, by a cigar screwed in the extreme left corner of the mouth. Almost always, but not on this particular night, he completed a toilet in other respects quite common by carrying a slim lath for a walking-stick.

When he talked he uttered his words forcibly, projecting them straight at you between his teeth while he bit his cigar-end. No dialect marked his manner of speech. His tongue was not localized. He had travelled too far, had enriched his vocabulary too copiously, for that. Peculiar uses he had for words, it is true, and pronunciations for some of them that the lexicographers would not tolerate; but he soared far above dialect. He had an ear for euphonious sound and a love of rounded periods, with a remarkable memory for phrases. Singular emphasis was imparted to certain words which

belonged to his habitual speech by a way he had of prying their syllables apart, and dwelling hard on a disintegrated section, as if he was shaking it viciously between his teeth.

In manner, at first blush, Dunbar seemed cold and disdainful. Save from the twinkle in his eye, his facial aspect was one that did not suggest heart-warmth.

"I don't half believe, Dunbar," said Conductor Steph Ashley, one of the goodly fellows who were combining their efforts this night to eclipse the moon with tobacco smoke, "that you know what a decent chap you are."

To which Dunbar made answer only by a quizzical elevation of his cigar.

"He doesn't begin to know how funny he is," said Tom Holliday, and thereupon a half dozen nearest the author of this seemingly innocent remark warned him by many silent tokens to avoid that subject. Dunbar's intimates were aware that if they expected a single flash of merriment from his corner his fancy must be allowed to play without open encouragement. If challenged, though ever so discreetly, to be entertaining, like a turtle he drew in his head and resisted attack from within an impenetrable shell.

His humour was a spring which would bubble clearly if left to its natural forces, but would yield only roiled water if pumped.

Holliday, by way of making amends for his unfortunate comment, suggested that whether Dunbar knew he was a decent chap or not, the Common Council were lamentably ignorant of the fact, or they would have made an exception in his case in enforcing the new ordinance which prohibited the ringing of bells in the public streets. This reference to a late inspiration of the city fathers, looking to the good order of the town, was just the turn the conversation needed.

"Hungry travellers want to know where to get doughnuts. They come at sound of the bell. What are you going to do about it, Lew?" Dunbar was asked—a question of pertinence, seeing that it was the custom of every eating-house which did business in and about the depot to summon the famished passengers from incoming trains by ringing a bell in the doorway.

"What am I goin' to do?" Dunbar said. "Why, sound the loud tocsin o'er Egypt's dark sea. Didn't you hear my bell to-day, when silence reigned everywhere else up and down the alley?"

No, nobody had heard it—which was evidence

that no one of the number had been in that neighbourhood that day while the trains came in and went out.

"I'm a law-abidin' citizen, gentlemen, as you all know," Dunbar went on. "So the bell keeps ringin' for Sarah from my door."

"You've fixed the aldermen, of course," from one, and "How'd you get around the law?" from another.

"O, I'm on the inside," Dunbar said as he sat down with an air of complacency hinting unmistakably that something was coming.

So it was. Such a law was in force in Salina, and it was being made of avail, too, through the best vigour of the six uniformed policemen that Salina then boasted. But this law, like so many others on the statute books, had its weak points, and Lewis Dunbar struck it right there. It stopped bells from being rung in the public streets, but did not pretend to exact surrender of an ancient and honoured method of domestic summons within one's own house. It was still permissible, inasmuch as tyranny had not yet superseded liberty under the "constitution and by-laws of Jefferson and Hamilton," to call a household to breakfast, or dinner, or supper, by a method so approved. Surely no Common

Council could invade a man's castle in that way. No, siree, as Dunbar went on to show, he could ring a bell as much as he pleased off the public streets. Nor was there a law to compel a man, honouring the law in its spirit and letter as he did, to keep his front door shut when the bell was ringing. Nothing in the law, either, regulated the size of bells to be employed in this perfectly legal manner. Dunbar said he had examined it with able counsel and was assured of his rights in the premises. Just as sure was he that it was within bounds of the law (not to speak of the glorious Declaration of Independence) to give forth the clangour of sounding brass *inside* his own place of business, however tumultuous the knell, while a bright-faced boy in a white apron, armed and equipped with a tongueless bell, went through the motions of ringing a bell on the *outside*.

Which showed that Lewis Dunbar had a head on his shoulders. His customers did not care from which casting of brass issued the clangourous call. Indeed, when they learned how ingeniously Dunbar was circumventing the Common Council of Salina, they ate of his provender with the more relish and advertised him abroad. Hundreds got off on his side of the trains to help Dunbar square accounts

with an oppressive administration of city affairs. They would ask for Dunbar's eating-house when the grimy cupola of the depot was ringing with the cries of rival establishments nearer at hand, and follow the sound of the outlawed bell across the intervening alley.

Dunbar's doughnuts were well nigh as famous as his bell. A visitor to Salina would no more think of leaving town without eating of them than he would think of omitting to look at the salt works, then the great industry of the town. It was of Dunbar's doughnuts, by the way, that his friends were talking that night when mention of the bell ordinance interrupted the discussion.

"They say your doughnuts are very filling, Lew," remarked Chet Whitaker, "and one of these days I'm going to try one."

"Fillin'?" was Dunbar's reply, "fillin'? Why three of 'em'll last a hungry man into the middle of Wis-consin."

"I've heard so," Whitaker went on, "and have felt it was robbing you to buy them at so small a price. Is there any money in them for you, or do you make and sell them out of philanthropic motives?"

"It's the best part of my business," Dunbar said.

"Do you know doughnut makin's forty per cent better'n stealin'? You see, ten pounds of flour and ten pounds of lard'll make—let me see—about five thousand doughnuts. I'll let you figure the profits with doughnuts sellin' at a cent apiece."

"Yes, I see," was Whitaker's rejoinder, "but just flour and lard won't make doughnuts. You've got to sweeten them, and sugar's high."

"O, the sweetenin' costs little of anythin'," Dunbar said. "I work it this way: While they're bilin' in the kittle, I hire a German clari-on-ette player to grind out 'Hum, Sweet Hum' and the doughnuts come out tastin' like honey. After the cruel war's over I may put in a lee-tle juice of the cane, but then agin I mayn't."

"Is your process patented, Lew?" asked Ashley. "If not I'd like to try it on a rich old aunt of mine I want to sweeten."

"I'm goin' to try for a patent," said Dunbar. "That's what I'm goin' to New York for to-morrer. You see I've got the doc-u-ments here."

With this Dunbar produced from a ponderous wallet, pulled from an inside pocket of his waistcoat, a slip of paper that was quickly indentified as a railroad pass. Some curiosity was expressed in the company as to how Dunbar procured it, and he

was not loath to explain. It came out that the real object Dunbar had in undertaking the New York trip was to find a school for his daughter, whom, he said, he was about to remove from the care of a distant relative in order that she might be "brought up accordin' to Hoyle." Grace Dunbar was known to Dunbar's intimate friends as a sweet-faced girl of fifteen or sixteen years, to whom he was trying the best he could to be a mother as well as a father. Grace never came to Dunbar's establishment at the depot except under escort of the uncommunicative woman who had her in charge. But when she came, all else in the world took second place. Even a train-load of famished soldiers on the way to the front, or to the rendezvous at Elmira, had to stand aside. The fact that they flashed their bounty money in Dunbar's face and clamoured for all he had in the house made no difference. He had eyes only for the girl.

"So you're going to take your child away, are you, Lew?" Ashley put in, after Dunbar had unbosomed himself to the extent indicated.

"I'm goin' down to the burg," he replied, moving uneasily in his chair, "to talk with my attorneys—Charles O'Connor and Rufus Choate—about that patent—and to transact a leetle other business."

This latter with a touch of genuine feeling.

"I don't want to encourage a grindin' cor-poration," he continued, "so I dropped in yesterday on Superintendent Latham to see if I couldn't get a pass. I didn't want to trouble my old friend Dean Richmond, you see. 'How do, Lewis?' said Mr. Latham. I said 'How do, Mr. Latham?' 'What can I do for you?' he says. 'Nothin' much,' says I. 'Come now,' says he, 'what is it?' 'Well,' says I, 'I'd like a pass for two to New York,' and he took it kindly. 'To New York,' he said, 'don't you want to come back?' said he, and I knew it was all right. 'Yes,' I said, 'one of us does.' And while I talked he made pen tracks. Then he handed me this re-ward of merit."

Dunbar was fondling the pass between his thumb and forefinger.

"Is that all?" remarked the conductor.

"Jest what *he* said," Dunbar replied—" 'Is that all?' Seein' I had him on the run, I said somethin' else. Said I: 'It's a kind of trouble to you, Mr. Latham, to have me callin' once or twice a year for these?' 'No trouble at all,' he says. 'Yes, it is,' I says, 'and I've been thinkin' it'd help out if I had an annual.'"

"An annual pass?" asked Whitaker, reflecting

the general surprise of the others that their old friend should be so importunate.

"Just what *he* said," Dunbar went on. "And I said 'Yes.' 'Come now,' he says, 'why should you have an annual?' You see the temper-a-ture was droppin' like soot through a stovepipe. 'Don't I feed your passengers?' I says. 'Dean Richmond ought to know that,' I says. 'Yes,' he says, 'but where does the obli-ga-tion come in, the value received? The railroad don't give annuals for nothin',' he says. 'Obli-ga-tion?' I says, 'obli-ga-tion? Don't I feed the railroad's passengers? Wouldn't they starve to death if it wasn't for me?' 'And wouldn't you starve to death if it wasn't for them and the railroad,' he says. 'You ought to pay the railroad,' he says, 'for givin' you business.' 'No,' I says, 'that's not it. Don't I feed the passengers?' I says. He says, 'Yes,' and then I had him."

"Had him? How?" asked Ashley.

"How? How?" was Dunbar's reply. "This way, and Mr. Latham, bein' a man of sense, saw it. 'Don't I feed your passengers?' I says. 'Yes,' he says. 'And don't I feed 'em so's you can get three in a seat, and cut out a car every time you run a train into Salina?'"

"And you got your annual?" was Whitaker's question.

"Not yet, but I got a letter to the high-mock-a-mocks in New York, and Mr. Latham says they won't be able to re-sist my argument."

"You ought to have been a lawyer, Uncle Lew," was the comment of Charlie Greenfield, "how did you come to miss being one?"

"Miscue, I guess," was the eating-house keeper's answer. "But I'm a long way from done, yet, so don't look sur-prised if I come home with a chattel mortgage on Charles O'Connor and Rufus Choate's belongin's."

But Dunbar brought nothing back from New York but a heavy heart, and the reason therefor will presently appear.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPLE OF HIS EYE.

TWO or three days later Lewis Dunbar was safely aboard an outgoing train with his daughter by his side. There were tear-drops in her eyes as she waved her hand to the good woman who had just surrendered her charge, as she felt, if Grace did not, for all time. The handkerchief with which the father wiped away the moisture from his daughter's cheek might have been used as well on his own. Grace nestled at her father's side when the train drew out of the depot and rolled rather leisurely through the long street, into the tunnel under the canal, and out into the green fields.

"So you're off for the big city?" was Conductor Ashley's salutation a quarter of an hour later, when Dunbar handed him the pass in prompt recognition of his demand for "Tickets!" as he swung open the door at the front end of the car. "And this is your girl, eh? Sis, be careful your papa doesn't lose his money at three card-monte in New York, won't you?"

Dunbar and Ashley were great cronies, but this morning this was not so manifest as usual, it being plain that Dunbar was not in the mood for levity: or perhaps he resented being prodded into any display of it in the presence of his daughter. So the conductor went down the aisle about his business.

"Were you ever in New York?" asked Grace after a little while, looking up into Dunbar's face.

"Yes, sir, I've been there."

"You've been everywhere, haven't you?"

"Pretty much everywhere," said Dunbar, and by this time he felt that juvenile curiosity was developing a serious question.

"Do people who go there always lose money?" Grace asked. It was evident the conductor's gibe had struck in.

"Ask the con-ductor," Dunbar replied, gently tucking Grace's form a little closer. Quoting it word for word, his conversation indicates a curtness on Dunbar's part that was far, very far, from representing his real feelings. But as prolific as his vocabulary was, it was absolutely devoid of such terms of endearment as usually enliven the intercourse of a father and daughter. Somehow or other he had missed learning the tender phrases the paternal instinct coins to express its love in. It

seemed as if this plain, blunt, wordly-wise man was in actual dread of the blue-eyed girl at his side; fearful even of the wistful glances which now and then searched his face; for father and daughter had not been so much together that they knew each other any too well. Grace, it was plain, was to a certain degree in awe of the man, and he was too keen not to perceive this feeling of timidity, without knowing how to overcome and dissipate it. It was the natural consequence of the paternal and filial instincts having had slack opportunity of becoming welded by the most common of Nature's laws.

Dunbar took care of Grace, and took care of her, too, with a lavish hand—but what he did was mostly the result of kindly suggestion from either the girl herself or her custodian. He had anticipated her wants and desires only in such trivial matters as keeping her supplied with candy, or pin-money, or seeing that she had a sled in winter and a doll-carriage in summer. The bills he paid for her dresses and fixings at the best stores in Salina satisfied him that he was doing by Grace what a loving father should, and he did it all, so far as it went, with infinite pleasure. He had been very urgent always with the woman who had charge of her that

no wish of his daughter's should miss reaching him. Although this mandate was not obeyed to the letter, its issue was evidence of what was in the father's mind. He thought of her, of course, but not quite in the way fathers usually do of their children.

The very idea he was carrying out this day, now that he was taking Grace to New York to place her in a convent school, was suggested to him by a chance visit to his eating-house of a widowed mother and her daughter, a child of about Grace's age. While they partook of a hasty lunch during the old-time "Ten minutes for refreshments" Dunbar had heard the mother telling the waiter of her intentions. What he heard solved a problem long in his mind. All there was about it was that he wanted Grace to have "the best money could buy," and better than was obtainable in the world of which he was a part. It was an odd thing for Lewis Dunbar to do, people said, but he did it, as he did many another eccentric thing. It had been a neighbourhood story that Grace's mother had been "a little too good for what she married" and that she would be happier dead than alive. But this was a story fifteen or sixteen years old—as old as Grace herself—whose coming into the world had

been marked soon after by the death of the mother. People had forgotten it all now. Those who recalled that Dunbar had "gone West" within the year of his bereavement, knew he had returned to Salina a widower still. They never knew, for there was no one to tell them, how as time went on the neighbours' idle gossip became the strongest conviction of Dunbar's life.

All these things were passing in the mental review of Dunbar as the train sped on, Grace nestling at his side. By and by Grace turned from an absorbed contemplation of scenery visible from the car window and said :

"If mamma was alive she would be going to New York with us, wouldn't she?"

Dunbar was at a loss for an answer to this inquiry. He was happily relieved by the entrance of Conductor Ashley, who came directly to Dunbar's seat. Grace instantly thought of the other question which Dunbar had left unanswered.

"Papa asked me to ask you," she said rather timidly, "if every one who went to New York lost his money?"

Ashley looked puzzled. He had forgotten his thrust at his friend. Dunbar himself had to think twice before recalling the incident.

"The gal thinks the old man might be plucked by the card sharps," Dunbar remarked, when he recalled it.

"O, your dad's all right," the conductor said. "I guess he knows enough to go in when it rains."

An aphorism which was of course wholly lost on the girl, save that the manner of Ashley's speech, if not its exact words, told her no real danger lurked in their path.

"But every one is not as wise as you are, Dunbar," Ashley went on. "There's a pretty slick fellow in the front car who seems to have found some good customers at a dice game. You ought to go in and see him work. Perhaps you know him. Anyway he'd keep you guessing."

An approaching station took the conductor away, leaving Dunbar and Grace to their own resources. An elderly woman in the seat ahead who had spoken to Grace once or twice in a kindly way now offered her a picture paper, and its acceptance opened a conversation which finally resulted in Grace taking a seat with her new-found acquaintance.

Dunbar, seeing that she was happily employed, concluded to take a look into the front car, his curiosity having been aroused, no doubt, by the re-

port that something in the nature of a game of chance was in progress there. He said to Grace that he was going to smoke.

Dunbar thought he could call by name every man who shuffled a deck or shook a dice box on the line of the railroad, but the shifty gentleman whose operations had so interested the smoking car passengers was a stranger to him.

Conductor Ashley was among the onlookers when Dunbar strolled into the car.

"Who's your friend?" Ashley asked.

"Don't know him from a side of sole leather," Dunbar replied. "But he's quite a trickster with the spotted bones, I can tell you."

The stranger was certainly making his fare to the next station, judging by the drift of the game.

"Want to try your luck, friend?" said the stranger, looking up at Dunbar, who, by this time, was at close range. Four players were occupying two seats facing one another, a carpet sack serving as a board on which to turn out the dice.

"No great hurry 'bout it," Dunbar said. "I'll wait till the clock in the steeple strikes twelve, and then pre-haps I'll jine in."

"Any time," said the stranger.

Ashley was at Dunbar's ear.

"He's got it down fine, hasn't he?" the conductor remarked.

"Sure as preachin'," Dunbar rejoined.

At this juncture one of the players, a young fellow who might have been a college student, got up with the remark that he was through. No one among those who clustered about dropped into the vacant place.

"Interested yet, old man?" said the stranger.

"I begin to itch a leetle, sonny," Dunbar said.

"Your money is as good as any other man's," said the stranger as he threw deuces and lost. "And so is mine, you see," he added. The suspicious might have called it bait.

"I'm a very humble dweller on the face of this earth," Dunbar said, "and might not last long."

The stranger's eyes made a swift survey of his man.

"I'll put my bank roll against your sparklers," he said, indicating with a nod Dunbar's diamond breast-pin.

"The crown jewels are your'n if you win 'em."

Whereupon Dunbar plumped himself into the vacant seat. "You're quite a wizard at dice," he said, "but if you covet the lustre of the crown jewels you've got to come down with the rhino.

I'll tell you what I'll do : Let's make it a five-dollar clip."

"You're the doctor," the stranger said.

The two passengers remaining in the game up to this point agreed in a breath that they would become spectators.

"You won't mind," said Dunbar, "swappin' horses crossin' the stream, if we're goin' to make my bug the stake?"

And Dunbar produced from his breeches pocket three dice a little the worse for wear.

The stranger winced a trifle, the onlookers thought.

"I like my own fixings best," he said.

"But we're playing for the crown jewels," Dunbar replied in a persuasive voice.

The stranger looked at Dunbar as if he were trying to peer into his very soul. It was one of those glances that cut like a knife. He evidently wanted to beware of catching a Tartar. Then he picked Dunbar's dice from the board, and rolling them over and over in his open palm, made this proposition :

"Well, mister, I'll go considerable on this speculation, with your tools, if you don't mind me doubling on you?"

Dunbar promptly answered :

"Nary mind. Joy be with you. Only you must stick to one number. We always shake dice that way at the corner grocery."

"All right, I'm down," and on the board went a five-dollar note. The stranger was playing sixes.

"I'll jiggle and wiggle them good and hard," said Dunbar, "so you can't complain you're not gettin' the wuth of your money."

Out rolled the dice. They came up treys. Dunbar had won.

"Sixes again," said the stranger, backing his choice with another note.

"I'll give them another tilt," Dunbar said, "just for luck. There you be."

The stranger had hardly laid down his wager before the dice showed the trey sides again.

"Treys, eh?" was the loser's exclamation.

"Sure 'nough," Dunbar said. "They're trained to come up that way."

"Down," the stranger cried, as he began to fidget, but placing his five dollars on the board as before.

"You're a reg-u-lar fightin' chicken, ain't you?" put in Dunbar, as he tossed a bank note into the centre.

The dice rattled again, and the turn of the box brought forward the old familiar treys.

"This time I give you the double hitch," said the stranger, as he put down ten dollars.

Dunbar matched the bet and fondled the little box, which on the instant turned the dice treys up as before.

"Twenty down," was the answer of the stranger, who, by this time was showing colour in his cheeks.

"So much more for the scrap heap," said Dunbar as demurely as you please. "Let's go in with head and tail up."

As Dunbar was about to make the next throw, the stranger spasmodically caught his arm, and said :

"Those skulls may be all right, but say, old top, if you do have the luck to hatch out treys again, I'll eat them."

"Well," Dunbar drawled out, holding the box over the dice after turning it, "I'll give you a dinner off the bones."

Up came the treys. The next moment the stranger, as good as his word, snatched the dice from the board and thrust them into his mouth.

"Skins and all," Dunbar said as he raked in the pot.

"Give me back my money," shouted the stranger,

starting from his seat, and scattering the group of passengers who had collected around the improvised gaming table. "Those bones are loaded, and you've cheated me."

"You know beans when the bag's open," Dunbar replied. "They are chuck full of lead, and if you swallow 'em, they won't set well on your stummick. Are you all done, or do you throw up the sponge?"

"Give me back my money," cried the gambler, making a pugnacious advance toward Dunbar, whose answer was :

"Five dollars of your pewter for my bones, and if you say the word, double or quits on the next throw."

By this, the stranger was within reach. The next instant Dunbar had spun his man around by the shoulders, and fetching him a sounding blow on the back, sent him half way the length of the car. In the lurch he gasped, and from his open mouth the dice fell on the floor in front of him.

"The sea gives up its dead!" cried Dunbar.

The stranger, still struggling to get his breath, bent down to recover the dice, when he suddenly stopped, and drawing back his outstretched hand, exclaimed in a feeble, despairing voice :

"Well, I'll be teetotally damned if those skulls haven't turned up treys again!"

It was indeed so. A roar went through the car, in which the stranger did not join. The brakeman recovered the dice, and dashing them with water handed them back to Dunbar, who immediately turned to the stranger, with the remark :

“You had better ask the conductor to wake you at the next station. You want to get off there.”

And he did. He offered, in recognition of a suggestion made by Dunbar, to refund the money he had won from the others who had played at dice with him. They thought he had been sufficiently punished, and as the winnings from them had been small, he took his ill-gotten gains with him, Dunbar making good to them their losses by a division of his spoils.

When Dunbar returned to the car in which he had left Grace, he found her fast asleep with a picture paper crumpled in her hand. He nodded in fitful slumber a good part of the way to Albany, where the crossing of the Hudson River was made by ferry, and where he and Grace had a bite to eat. It was dark when they reached New York. Grace was so tired with the long journey that she saw little of Broadway as she went rumbling down that great street to the Astor House in a dimly lighted stage.

The new world she had entered was not revealed to her until the following morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE GILDED CROSS.

GRACE had gone to bed at 11 o'clock in a room opening off the one assigned to Dunbar. On his arrival at the hotel he had requested the assistance of a chambermaid, into whose care he had transferred her with a solicitous admonition not to leave her if she appeared to be afraid, and an intimation that watchfulness over the girl would not go unrewarded. Grace, of course, showed no sign of fear, and once alone went fast asleep. When Dunbar came up to his room an hour later, he looked into her room to see if she was safe. He felt a tugging at his heart, as if to go in and kiss the sweet face on which the faint light fell, but he drew the door partly shut instead, and tiptoed about his own room in a way that quite surprised himself.

When he awoke next morning, and rolled over preparatory to getting up, he heard Grace run out of his room, the windows of which he found faced Broadway. Her windows looked out on the side street. It appeared she had been awake and dressed

for an hour or more, and with wonderful interest had been watching the great city get into daily motion. The din and bustle were ringing in her ears. She had been trying to identify the various noises which combined to shake the air about her—the tooting of the steamboats on the river, the shrill cries of the newsboys, the rumble of the cars, the shouts of the draymen, the calls of the bellboys in the hotel halls. It was all very strange to a country girl.

“I didn’t make a noise and wake you up, did I, papa?” Grace asked when Dunbar said she might come in.

“No. I heard the voice of the sluggard callin’. Now we’ll go down and see what the larder of this tavern af-fords the weary traveller.”

At the breakfast table Dunbar told Grace that the Convent of St. Mary the Virgin, whither they were bound, was not in New York, but in Brooklyn, and that in order to get there they would have to take another ride on a steamboat as they had done at Albany. He looked at an addressed envelope he took from his wallet, and said he thought he could discover the hiding-place of the nuns without hiring a guide. Not all of these comments by her father were fully comprehended by Grace. She

did not always try to fathom his meaning. She was just of the age when she knew that there are things that require years of experience to understand.

Grace had seen more of her father on this trip from Salina to New York than it had been her good fortune to do before, and had yielded an increased admiration to him as a man who was familiar with everything about him. On the way to New York he had entertained her by pointing out, as they passed them, the many places of interest on the line of the railroad. Out of the volume of his experiences and vicissitudes as a wandering spirit, earlier in life, he had taken pains to enlighten her. While they stayed at Albany, for example, he told her of the meetings of the legislature, the men who made the laws, omitting such details touching his own contact with the law-makers as a girl of her years would not be interested in. As the train whirled by he pointed out to her Sir William Johnson's stone mansion near Amsterdam, and told her how the lordly owner of it had made war with the help of the Indians on the thrifty colonists who afterward won their independence and made the Fourth of July a national holiday. On the way down the Hudson there was an endless number of things to

talk about. The river reminded Dunbar of the Mississippi, and of the life which coursed up and down its broad bosom the father had much to tell. Bits of history, too, flashed to his mind as the train sped onward, and he embellished them as he only could. Through the deepening dusk under the frowning peaks of the distant Catskills Grace peered across the river toward Newburg, where Dunbar told her George Washington had quartered his forces, and the girl dozed off into sleep as she listened, and then dreamed of an encamped army whose spectral forms she had seemed to see as she looked through blinking eyes into the gathering mists above the great river. She had been wondering all day long how her father had found time to store his memory with so much knowledge. It was unaccountable to her, and she thought of her father as a very wise, a very learned man. She felt that her vision of the world had been vastly widened.

Dunbar knew New York fairly well. As he and Grace walked to the Brooklyn ferry he told her all he knew of the streets and places they passed. Grace's wide-open eyes were a quick-acting camera this morning. She saw everything in sight.

A horse car went within a block of the Convent of St. Mary's, and that means of easing the journey

was made of avail by Dunbar. The way over had been so pleasurable that Grace had quite forgotten she was on the point of separating from her father. But it was never out of his mind. He was intent upon this very trial of his life when the conductor of the car called the street and motioned him off the car.

"This must be the nunnery," Dunbar said abstractedly as he stood on the curb in front of a two-story brick building situated in a green plot some distance back from the street. A high picket fence enclosed the grounds, and through the gate in this Dunbar and Grace made their way.

"Yes, I've called the turn," Dunbar added as he caught sight of a gilded cross lifting above the highest point on the roof of the building. "Father O'Horan said it would have a sign out."

"What did you say, papa?" Grace said, not shocked, but puzzled to know what Dunbar meant.

"The cross, the cross," her father replied, pointing up.

They were now inside the convent grounds. "You'll have to do some of the talkin'," said Dunbar to his daughter, as they neared the doorway which was now in view at the top of a half dozen steps, at the end of the gravelled walk. "You

know, sis, I'm a poor hand at talkin' to women folks—sisters they call 'em, I guess. I'll give 'em my letter from Father O'Horan and then take to the woods."

"Take what?" said the girl.

The two stood at this moment within the narrow vestibule, and Dunbar had his hand on the bell-pull. He made no reply to the last question, but dropping his hand from the knob, patted Grace on the back, and said:

"Leetle girl, the whirligig of time is goin' round, and we have come to a jumpin' off place. I want to be good to my leetle daughter, and she mustn't forget her rough old daddy. Say, sis, if you don't like this place, and they don't treat you right, you write and let me know, and you bet your boots I'll snake you out in a jiffy. It's all for you, sis, and anythin' you want you can have."

This was said with more feeling than had ever before, according to Grace's notion, been put into her father's professions of affection or interest in her. She never felt herself to be as dear to him as then. Without knowing just why, she let the tears trickle down her cheeks.

Dunbar did not look at her—indeed kept his face turned away. With a sudden movement he jerked the bell-pull.

"It's a nice lookin' place anyway," he remarked while they waited for an answer at the door. But he never put his eyes on the girl.

They were admitted without delay by a sweet-faced member of the sisterhood in the dress of their order. Without a word, once inside, Dunbar handed the sister Father O'Horan's letter. She read the superscription, and after inviting them to be seated in a room off the main hall, said she would deliver the letter to the Mother Superior. It was so still that even the gentle rustle of the sister's dress, as she went softly down the hall, made an echo. Not a word was spoken by either father or daughter.

The Mother Superior appeared after a short space. A kindly face shone out from under her hood. She looked so much like what an ideal mother should look like that Dunbar's suggestion that his daughter might not be well-treated beneath that roof instantly struck him as a vile implication.

"I can tell you when I get to Heaven by the people I meet," he said afterward in recounting his experience at the convent to the former guardian of Grace.

"Mr. Dunbar?" said the Mother Superior, without any ceremony. "And this is your daughter. I am glad to see you, child."

Grace seemed to feel the gracious influence of the woman, and though not exactly invited to be so formal, by any sign of the Mother Superior, went forward with her hand extended. The good sister stooped and kissed Grace on the forehead.

"Father O'Horan tells me," the Mother Superior said, "that you contemplate leaving your daughter here permanently. Is that your plan, Mr. Dunbar?"

"Yes, mum."

"And the child—she understands it? Understands this is to be home for her for some time to come?"

"Yes, mum. But I want to say right here, mum, that if she don't like it I'll want to take her back."

"Of course, of course," replied the Mother Superior. "We would prefer to have it so—much prefer it, Mr. Dunbar. But I think we can make your daughter happy."

"Nuthin's too good for her, mum, and whatever she wants she's to have—no matter what it costs," Dunbar said with considerable emphasis.

"Perhaps we had better not put it exactly that way, Mr. Dunbar. It might not prove just what you desired to have her too liberally indulged—that is not our method—but I am sure she will be contented. This is a very happy household, and

though most of our girls return to their homes at stated intervals, enough remain so that she will not get lonely. Might I suggest that you come to see her whenever you can conveniently? She has no mother to look after her, the letter says?"

Dunbar avoided an answer to this question, but went on to say :

"O, I'll come fast 'nough, mum, and thank you for askin' me. Sis is as good as they make 'em, and I wouldn't hurt her feelin's for all the money in the mint."

"Now as to her lessons, Mr. Dunbar," the Mother Superior continued, "shall you provide for music and the other special studies?"

"The hull business," Dunbar put in, "the hull business. I want sis to go the limit. I don't care a sou markee what it costs. Give her the best room in the house and send me the bill."

"I think I understand your wishes, Mr. Dunbar, and will be guided by them—within the rules of the convent, of course."

"Thank you, mum."

"Mr. Dunbar," said the Mother Superior, "may I ask if you are of our church—a Catholic? Father O'Horan does not mention this."

"No, I can't say as I am, mum," Dunbar replied.

"I'm a leetle shy on re-ligion, mum, but I guess what's good 'nough for you's good enough for sis. Eh, sis?"

"I've been to the Catholic church," Grace said. "I went to a wedding with auntie once. Father O'Horan was there."

"A fine man," said Dunbar. "Do you know him, mum?"

"No," rejoined the Mother Superior, "but I know of him, and know how well he is thought of."

"A fine man," Dunbar continued. "He's got sportin' blood in his veins, mum, he has. Only the other day he caught a chap robbin' the poor box—that's what they call it ain't it?—and threw him half way to the canal. Most of them parsons are psalm-singin' dunderheads, but he's true blue, he is."

The Mother Superior's raised eyebrows showed that she was not wholly displeased with this proof that in Salina the defenders of the faith were of the church militant. She, however, broke into the drift of these comments with the question:

"You admire Father O'Horan so much, Mr. Dunbar, I should think you would go to him for spiritual consolation. Or are you afraid of being made a Catholic?"

"Afraid of nuthin', mum, I jest flee from the wrath to come. You'll have to let me out on the church question, if that's what you mean. I don't know the doxology from a banjo solo. If it comes to that the only religious thing I can do is to take up a collection. I know they're savin' souls when they pass the mission-ary box, and then I drop in a dime or two, just for luck. No, mum, I'm a rough old sinner, I guess, and will have to pass."

The Mother Superior's only reply to this exposition of Dunbar's creed was to say, as she folded Grace close in her arms :

"Your religion, Mr. Dunbar, is evidently not in your professions, but in your deeds. I shall not attempt to convert you."

"Papa is a good man," Grace here put in, as if she had gathered from the conversation that her father was losing ground in the estimation of the Mother Superior.

"Yes, child, and so good, he ought to be a good Catholic."

"You can't make a whistle out of a sow's tail," Dunbar said. "But if you learn sis there how to pray for her daddy I won't say a word. And you won't find Lewis Dunbar slow in antein' for the heathen. Hear me!"

"We will try to teach her to love God and revere her father, and that is the foundation of all religion," said the Mother Superior.

"'Nough said," Dunbar replied. "I stand pat."

In this way, then, was the future of Grace settled. When it came to a leave-taking, both father and child made manifest the depth of their grief, though Dunbar hurried the painful scene as effectually as he knew how. The good sister smoothed the rougher places by gracious words of cheer, which had the effect of sending Dunbar out into the street with a lighter heart than he had hoped to carry from the convent.

When Dunbar reached the sidewalk, and looked back at the convent walls, his gaze rested for more than a moment on the gilded cross which glimmered in the sun above him. For the first time in his life he knew what was signified by the form in which the crown jewels were set.

CHAPTER IV.

MEMORIES.

DUNBAR cocked his feet on the sill of a front window of the Astor House an hour later and stared into the hurly-burly of the busiest street in the world. He took dinner as a matter of form ; was so abstracted that the waiter who came for his order thought he was nonplussed by the variety of the bill-of-fare, and obsequiously offered to assist him by bringing him the best in the house. Nothing short of this aspersion upon his epicurean skill would have aroused him at this juncture. If he did not take pleasure in eating what came he did in ordering it, to the great amazement of the waiter, who expressed his wonder to a fellow servitor how "that Jerseyman"—everything odd in New York was said to be of Jersey origin—learned so much about what was good to eat.

"See him," said the waiter ; "he eats nothing but the hearts of the celery, and when I brought him the burgundy he ordered he said it was chilled, and

said he wanted it off the chimney piece. He knows what he's about."

Dunbar had intended to be back in Salina the following day, but it was not until three days later that he returned. Even to himself he did not want to admit that he was delaying his departure because he could not readily bring himself to increase the distance between himself and the little girl he had left at the Convent of St. Mary's; but it is true, nevertheless, that he crossed the river twice, and once in a storm of cold rain, just to have another look at the gilded cross, which in a vague way he had begun to associate with Grace's life.

It was fully a week after his return to his accustomed place in his eating-house in Salina before Dunbar was approachable to his friends. They chaffed him a trifle, now and then, about his downheartedness, only to be sorry for it, as it was all too plain he was out of sorts. Only those who knew the man least trespassed on his period of dejection.

"Jordan's a hard road to travel," he said to one of the inquirers who ventured to ask him what was ailing him.

"The old man is himself again," Conductor Ashley remarked to a knot of the good fellows of the town, whom he ran across in the street and who

were speaking of Dunbar's low spirits since he went to New York. "Don't quiz him about it, but he had a letter from his little girl to-day, and she's having a nice time and likes the convent. That's all Lew wants to know."

The evening session at the eating-house verified Ashley's conjecture. Dunbar was up to concert pitch.

"You haven't told us what you saw in New York, Lew," Whitaker said after the group was formed.

"There's a good deal of air to the square inch down there," Dunbar replied. "The con-stables wear uniforms and New York time is made for slaves. Talk about warm meals at all hours, they get up in the middle of the night to stay the pangs of hunger down there. Funny, too, I took a walk for my failin' health in the Bowery, and when I was goin' up everybody was comin' down the street. When I came to right about face, and hied me to my humble home at the Astor House, everybody was goin' up."

"So you put up at the Astor, did you, Lew? Everything suit you?"

"Down to the ground! It's the greatest she-bang this side the Milky Way. And you can believe me, for I've travelled. The Astor ro-tunda's like a mile

track. Nuthin' but purple and fine linen about the inn."

"And they gave you the bridal chamber, I suppose?" said Ashley.

"They received me with open arms. Entertainment for man and beast, you know."

"How's the feed, Lew?"

"As fine as silk. Everything cooked to the Queen's taste and an inducement in every plate to ask for a second helpin'. New York gets the top dressin', I guess, and we hayseeds take the leavin's."

"Get him to tell you about his dice game on the way down," whispered Ashley to one of the others. "It was a sight for sore eyes to see him beat the fellow at his own game."

"Any excitement in your travels, Lewis? Any one want to win your money?" Whitaker asked in response to the conductor's hint.

"Whoopee, yes! There was a light-fingered gent with a sweat-board and three shin-bones who thought he knew the game, wasn't there, Stephen? You had a squint at the proceedin's when they were at white heat. Did I scorch the chap's fingers, or didn't I?"

"You raised a blister I should say," was Ashley's reply. "Tell the boys about it, Lew; it's too good to keep."

Whereupon Dunbar narrated with keen relish his encounter with the travelling gambler, illustrating the story as he proceeded with the self-same dice, "trained to come up treys."

"I always have them con-cealed about my person," Dunbar said. "Pretty little things, you can never tell what a day'll bring forth. I picked 'em up in Cairo, Illinois, away back in the fifties when your Uncle Lew was gypsyin' around the country. I got tangled up with a hanky-panky game in which a gent was employin' 'em, but he left in such a hurry he forgot to take his tools—so I froze to 'em, and have carried 'em for good luck since. Great times, them old times."

It took only half an eye to discern that Dunbar was ruminating, and that if properly baited he might be induced to go over for the edification of his friends some part of his experience as a Mississippi tourist. His head was bent over to one side so as to throw his eyes straight to the ceiling. A smile, not as wide as a barn door, but a smile nevertheless, was squeezing out between the tightly closed lips, in which a lighted cigar was serving as an entering wedge. He had thrust his thumbs into the arm-holes of his rather gorgeous waistcoat, and was waiting for the spirit of reminiscence

to move him. If the top of his head could have been removed, to show the pictures in his mind, what he had to say would have had scenic embellishment as well as picturesque word-painting to make it entertaining. He was back on the big river again. The *Natchez Belle* was ploughing through the blackness of a summer night, the splash, splash, splash of the paddle-wheel seeming to time itself to the song the roustabouts were singing on the forward deck. There was a phantasmagoria of gloom-enshrouded shores, now receding, now coming sharply within hailing distance, as the boat swung back and forth to the line of the channel, visible only in the reddish glare of the gusty flame which intermittently rose above the twin stacks. In Dunbar's ears rang the monotonous cry of the man ahead taking soundings and calling them "By the mark." This time Dunbar did not have to stir from beside his own fireside to see a swarm of dusky figures, barefooted and bareheaded, sprawling in various stages of somnolent contortion on the cotton bales and boxes loading the steamer to the water's edge. As mentally vivid was the aspect of the cabins above deck, ablaze with rows of swinging lamps wrought in gilded metal, steadied in their motions by heavy strands of corded silk

from which depended great tassels; and in their glare a merry throng trying to speed the hours to bed-time. Dunbar was calling by name scores of men of commanding appearance, or no appearance at all, whose identity as passengers on Mississippi boats never passed unnoticed. In this vision of his, passing through his mind almost while he winked, he saw the scene shift from dreamy nights when lovers haunted the shadowed nooks and all was still, to nights when blood was flowing while untamed men arbitrated their differences at the point of the unsheathed bowie; he saw thousands lost and won, saw honour set under foot and dismay light the way to the suicide's death in the black river; he saw glorious womanhood at its worst and at its best—here admired, courted, majestic in its loveliness; there, no less lovely in outward semblance, preying and preyed upon.

And the splash, splash, splash of the paddle-wheel kept time to the plantation melody.

"Salina! Ten minutes for refreshments," cried Ashley, and Dunbar's wool-gathering came to an end.

"I was far away on the billow," he said by way of an apology, knocking the ashes off his cigar with a flirt of the little finger of the right hand.

"It's a great old river, though, and I want you to hear me."

"Exactly," put in Whitaker, "we want to hear you. Big games on the Mississippi, I suppose."

"As big as a meetin' house," Dunbar said. "Say, they don't know the meanin' of a turn of a card in this neck of woods. Did I ever tell you of my big run of luck on the *Natches Belle*? Seven thousand minted dollars stamped by Uncle Sam at Washington! Whoopee! All raked in at one sittin' and that the last night before we got to New Orleans. Well, it's all true, true as gospel."

Everybody present drew up a little closer.

"I'd been down on my luck that trip till we reached Memphis, where my good angel got on board in the shape of a planter who'd just turned a cargo of cotton into the coin of the realm. Col. Claiborne was his cog-no-men. Ever been in Dixie? You're small potatoes and few to the hill down South unless you're a Claiborne or next of kin. The Colonel was full of pluck and plunder and couldn't wait to get his feet under the poker table. What a session it was! I'd never had the pleasure of the Colonel's acquaintance up to that stage of the game, but we cottoned to each other right off, and before we got through had the whole cabin to

ourselves, so far's sport was con-cerned. The Colonel knew the value of a hand, you can better believe, and you want to hear me, boys—when your Uncle Lew had his wits about him he was no babe in arms at the quiet game of draw. My rabbit's foot steered me safely 'mong the breakers from the start. Claiborne was a high-steppin' fellow with a wicked eye I had my doubts about. But he stuck it out, and when all was said and done I got my verdict."

"Your verdict?" said a listener in an inquiring tone.

"Yea, yea—the seven thousand. The Colonel said I had cleaned him out, and though he was mighty po-lite, I had a ticklish feelin' in my back-bone when I looked into his bright blue eye. Well, we made our landin' at New Orleans, and parted, he with an 'I'll see you agin, my friend' that I didn't half like. Easy come easy go, you know, and while I was with the New Orleanists I tried to do as the New Orleanists done. A great place for high jinks that! It come Sunday, which you may not know is the gala day of the seven. After the shades of night had fallen, I hied me to one of their masquerades, an octoroon ball. I was just goin' in when who should I run afoul of but my old friend

Col. Claiborne. He seemed powerful glad to see me, and after showin' that he was still a member of the bar in good standin', asked me in a sweet persuasive way to take a walk around the block, as he had suthin' very par-ticular to say to me. I felt like obligin' him, and out we went, into the black night. At the first turn he ran me into an alley, as dark as a pocket, where I couldn't see my hand before my face.

“‘Whoopee!’ I says, as we penetrated further than I wanted into the alley. ‘Get out o’ the wilderness. Let’s go where we can see the cards when they’re dealt.’”

“‘Dunbar,’ said Claiborne, as he caught me by the arm, and by the flicker of a street lamp at the far corner I could see his wicked eye, ‘luck has been dead agin me comin’ down the river, by Gad, sah.’

“‘Yes, the golden bowl was broken at the well,’ I says as I felt an icicle fall down my backbone.

“‘You’ve got to help me,’ says the Colonel.

“‘Fix the limit,’ was all I could say with my mouthful of heart.

“Then what does he do but he reaches back in the deep re-cesses of his coat collar and fetches up from under its folds a long knife with a blade keen

enough to cut soaked tissue paper. It was a bowie; you reckon I knew the brand.

“‘Let me have five dollars on this, will you, Dunbar? I want to go to the ball to-night,’ says he.

“I thought I saw kingdom comin’ as the steel flashed in the lamp light.

“‘Put up your scythe,’ says I, ‘I don’t want any col-lateral. Take ten; you may want to go to-morrer night.’

“Then I shelled out the coin, and seein’ the dagger safely disposed in its place of deposit down his neck, went back for a night of pleasure.”

“A narrow escape,” suggested Whitaker as Dunbar pushed his chair back and began again the process of chewing his cigar.

“Pre-haps not!” was Dunbar’s answer. “Anyway Claiborne made good the ten before I left New Orleans, and I knew him to be a chivalrous Southern gentleman. But I’ve often wondered what would have happened if I hadn’t paid down, cash on the nail. I’ve jest wondered what.”

“Was that the nearest you ever came, Lew, to being slashed with a bowie knife?” asked Milt Rice, who had joined the party in season to catch the drift of the narrative.

"Not much. You couldn't travel on the Mississippi without becomin' intimately acquainted with Mr. Bowie's hardware. But I led a charmed life and always took leg bail."

"Did you ever see any one killed with a knife?"

"One or two, and I've been sailin' with many of 'em who ought to have been killed. And they have wished the same of me, and many happy returns of the day. I was in pretty hot company once at a slave sale in Louisiana. If I wasn't as tough as leather my heart'd be bleedin' yet at the sight. An Algerine pirate native to the soil was tryin' to buy a slave girl. He had been overseer for a planter who was bein' sold out by the sheriff. The girl was one of those pancake-coloured sirens who break up families in the South. But every time the overseer raised the bid on her she shook as if he had hit her with a lash. I guess I must have said suthin' aloud that sounded like an Abo-lish speech, for as quick as a flash the auctioneer let out:

"'Why don't *you* bid on the gal?' he says. 'She the prettiest yaller gal in Louisiana. Can do anythin' from pickin' cotton to mindin' baby.'"

"Did you bid?" asked Ashley.

"Like a mice. She was tremblin' in the balance at \$2,000 when I took a hand.

“‘The ante’s pretty high,’ I chipped in, ‘but if you’re goin’ to sell flesh and blood by the pound like beefsteak I’ll invest a hundred or two in the black Venus. Make it \$2,100,’ I says.

“This was the biggest raise they had had, and the overseer walked over to where I stood, and lookin’ at nuthin’ in par-ticular, much less your Uncle Lew, said there wasn’t money enough in Louisiana to stop him from gettin’ the gal. Fool, fool that he was, I had him there.”

“You had a few loose dimes yourself I judge,” remarked Whitaker, patting Dunbar on the back in admiration of his staying powers.

“I was loaded for bears when he gave me a cue to his game,” Dunbar went on. “You see I wouldn’t have taken the gal for a gift, but I was bound to make her fetch a good price. I took in my man just as if we were playin’ a poker hand. At one hundred dollars a lick the bids went up to \$5,000. Then I plumped a raise of \$500 straight at the cuss. Whoopee! but it was a risk, but when he came back at me with a bid of only \$5,600 I felt safe. Next time I tried his soul with a raise to \$5,800. I saw him goin’ deep down in his pantaloons as if fondlin’ his roll, and brought him up

gaspin' with a \$100 bid. Back I went with another hundred, makin' \$5,900. He was squirmin', and dropped to a \$50 lift. He thought the gal was slippin' from his grasp. Boys, you ought to have seen that child of nature look at me. She was worth lookin' at, too, but I was not drawin' to queens that trip. My friend on t'other side was gettin' to the end of his rope. His last bid of fifty had hung fire long 'nough to show me he was about at the bottom of his pile. But my dander was up, and as a final shot I saw his fifty and made it fifty better, by biddin' \$6,050. I wondered what I would do if I had reached the top notch and should get the human chattel."

"You were just big on bluffs that day, eh, Lew?" was Rice's suggestion.

"It was root, hog or die with me, you can better believe. I waited to see what the fellow'd do, and I came up smilin', when he rushed up to the auctioneer's block and threw his wallet down with a bang. 'Seven thousand dollars and be damned to you,' he says. 'If you've got more money than that, you'll have to fight me for the gal, by Gad, sah,' and out came his bowie.

"'All down,' said I. 'Set 'em up on the other alley.'"

"And the Southerner got the girl?" inquired Ashley.

"Seven thousand dollars out and nuthin' but a nigger in," Dunbar replied.

"But you said she was good looking, Lew, didn't you?" Rice asked.

"As pretty as a red wagon."

"Weren't you sorry to let her go?"

"O, I had a tear to shed, but I was not prepared to shed it, and went my ways."

"How did the girl take it?" asked Whitaker.

"Never looked. I never liked women in distress. But that was years ago, boys. If it was all to be done over again that gal'd been saved if I'd been forced to hock the crown jewels to do it."

Three or four other questions touching the sale of the slave girl were asked Dunbar in quick succession, but to them he did not deign to make reply. He was thinking of another girl, every moment of whose happiness was now his whole concern. Strange, thought Dunbar, that he had just measured his passing interest in a slave girl by the value of his diamonds. Again the gilded cross!

No wonder the little company of friends broke up and went away that night puzzled to know why Dunbar suddenly became so uncommunicative.

CHAPTER V.

A STRANGER IN TOWN.

FATHER O'HORAN was waiting for Dunbar at the eating-house one morning when he came in. The priest was bound for New York, and had called to say that if Dunbar wished it he would make it a point to ask at the convent in Brooklyn after Grace. This unsolicited show of interest in the girl caught Dunbar at a great disadvantage, inasmuch as he had been postponing since his own return from New York the duty he felt he owed the priest for having recommended the convent. Dunbar had not even called on Father O'Horan to thank him for what he had been pleased to do, and conscious of the extent of his remissness, he was too abashed to do anything better than offer a very lame apology.

Father O'Horan was one of the conspicuous men of the community, too, at this time. His life in Salina had been filled with good deeds, dating as far back as the cholera epidemic in which his ministrations, extending beyond the realm of spiritual effort,

reached to actual service as a volunteer nurse in the community's dire extremity. He had himself been stricken with the dread disease, and been reported dead of it, having come through the valley of the shadow of death a prematurely old man. It was said Father O'Horan was known by sight to every grown man in Salina, and if that was not true, it must have been true of the children, who would stop at play any time to be patted on the head by the tall man in black with a crown of yellowish white hair falling to his shoulders. Had Father O'Horan cared to exercise his influence in that way, he might have controlled more than one political result, but despite the repeated inducements of party managers to draft him into service, he seemed content to mind his own business, which was the business of the Lord.

This morning Father O'Horan gave a little sign of his kindness of heart by sitting down with Dunbar to sip a cup of coffee, simply that his host might draw from this acceptance of his hospitality the thought that Dunbar's oversight had been forgiven. Dunbar was able to make the priest understand, if there had been previous doubt of the truth, that it was not a want of love for the girl that made him fail in courtesy. Father O'Horan

was overwhelmed with messages, mostly to the Mother Superior, looking to the happiness of Grace, that proved beyond question the tenderness of the father's affection for the girl.

"I'm not jest the kind of a father you read about, am I?" Dunbar asked, and without waiting for an answer continued: "But I jest want her, when she learns to know beans when the bag's open, not to be sorry Lewis Dunbar tagged her with his name. D'ye understand? I guess the less she sees of me the better. But I want her to keep on inti-mate terms with my bank account."

The arrival of the morning train for New York, on which Father O'Horan counted on taking passage, brought their conversation to a sudden close. Dunbar walked across the alley into the depot with the priest and helped him aboard the car.

Once the priest had taken his place in the car, Dunbar sauntered to the other end of the depot, taking care not to be within view of Father O'Horan while the train remained, which was for some twenty or thirty minutes. Yet he stood by to make a final wave of his hand as the train drew out signify his gratitude for what the good priest was doing.

To Josh Monk, the depot vendor of oranges and

peanut candy, whom Dunbar engaged in conversation in the interim, he confided the fact that he was there to see Father O'Horan off to New York. Everybody who had business around the depot found more or less diversion in talking with Monk. So it was no condescension on Dunbar's part to put in his time in that way, and he was rather proud to let it be known that he was on friendly terms with the popular priest.

"You're not any too sociable about it, Uncle," said Monk, wondering why, if Dunbar was saying farewell to Father O'Horan, he did not go through the customary motions outside the car window.

Monk had become familiar with depot etiquette by long observance of its varying phases, exactly as Dunbar had. The point was that they differed as to the binding quality of the usage. Dunbar thought there was nothing more essentially droll than the partings of people at the windows of railroad cars. Monk believed that that interminable period between the embarkation of a friend and the last view afforded by the passing train should be held sacred to the vocal or pantomimic delivery of fond farewells.

"Them 'ere Injuns," Monk remarked with considerable acidity of manner for him—for he was a

good soul—"do it your way. They stand 'round sayin' nothin' like a lot o' hitchin' posts. You ought to go down to the Reservation and make bead-work."

This was an illustrative reference to the quaint group of Onondagas, bucks and squaws, who made the depot a market for the sale of fancifully embroidered knick-knacks and bows and arrows wound with coloured worsted. No one ever accused them of being demonstrative.

"Say," said Dunbar, taking up his end of the argument, "when things are out o' kilter with me, do you know what I do? Well, there's nuthin' half so sweet in life as this tearin' the human heart into shreds to the soft music of a bullgine. I can lift myself out of the slough of despair watchin' a couple bunchin' good-byes at a car window. There's a woman at it now!"

He pointed down the depot toward a car beside which a middle-aged woman had taken a stand to beckon and grimace to a friend inside. "Just cast your optics on her and see if it wouldn't make a horse laugh himself to death. Just watch her! She can't hear a word the other woman inside is sayin', and the other woman can't hear her. Talk-in'? Of course she's talkin'. Dollars to doughnuts

I can call the turn on what she's jabberin' about. I'll bet Libbie's the name of the woman in the car. 'Libbie,' she says, 'don't forget to have Mate write to me.' Libbie can't hear a blessed word, so she up and says: 'I'll try not to, but if George comes home he'll see what can be done about it? Hope they won't spoil before he comes.' That's what the folks in the car hear her say. I might have known it. The old gal in the car is tryin' to raise the window. Look out or you'll bust your galluses. Of course it won't go up. Car windows never do. Now see Mrs. Dusenbury out there. She can't think of anythin' to say, so she stares up and down the tracks, and wishes with all her might the blamed train would start. Watch 'em, I say, watch 'em. Both smirkin' at one another, and lookin' as foolish as a pair of suckin' calves. In another minute Mrs. Dusenbury'll wave her hand. Yes, she's at it now. Talkin' again. Sayin' she hopes the old gal will find the children all well. Of course she hopes that, and before they came down to the depot she said it fifty times. Now the old gal is sayin' suthin', and the friend out here is noddin'—see her nod—as if she knew what it was; but bless your heart, she don't, and is only wonderin' why in the name of heaven the train don't go. Don't tell me

that ain't the funniest thing goin'. The great A-merican traveller's a queer fish, and no mistake, and when the great A-merican traveller's a female sayin' good-bye in a depot you want to stand from under. Now see her lookin' in her pocket-book as if she didn't know to a hundredth part of a cent all her ready cash. Just killin' time! What's she up to now? Yes, another trick of the trade. That's a sample of calico or suthin' she's holdin' up. See the old gal inside smile as if she was at the nigger minstrels. I tell you if the train don't start soon Mrs. Dusenbury will drop in a fit. She's about tuckered out now. All right! She's saved!"

The cry of "All aboard!" ended this merciless commentary on human weakness, and carried Dunbar down toward the center of the depot, where he yielded to the very impulse he was berating long enough to salute Father O'Horan's departure.

"Say, Monk," cried Dunbar, as he crossed the alley in the hearing of the orange vendor, "I guess I'll take mine out in bein' an Injun."

It happened that that night Dunbar put in an appearance at the Salina House, which more than any other of the popular places of resort in those days served the purposes of a club in the estimation of the convivial spirits of the young city. The Salina

House was as famous as any hostelry on the beaten path between the East and West of that day. Its spacious office, up a broad flight of steps from the main street, was a common ground where the best that was in the town met in jovial as well as enlightening companionship every evening of the week. It was a public place, to be sure, but tradition had decreed that to enjoy its hospitality the visitor's name must either appear on the registry as a guest, or bring to the assembled company within its doors something like standing in the community. By no means was everybody welcome. It was not exactly definable, the particular personal attribute by virtue of which citizens of Salina were admitted to membership of this unnamed club, but it was something marked enough to be readily recognised. Lewis Dunbar, for reasons that ought by this time to be manifest, was of the blood royal in the throng. Indeed, he came to the Salina House too rarely to satisfy its longing for the felicity of his company.

The time was coming when the Salina House was to take precedence over all rivalry as a place around which the life of the town ebbed and flowed. The hotel was now being lighted by gas and heated by furnace, and in the genial glow of both these ad-

vantages it was prospering as never before. There were those among the older frequenters of the hotel who were slow to accustom themselves to the innovations. They counted as a distinct loss to their old stamping ground the removal from its place of the great stove, almost as high as a chimney, with its oval base of corrugated iron, changing from cold grey to iridescent red as the coal was piled on of a winter's night. Some of those who chafed at the march of improvement toward the gas jet and the noisy registers had been so long of the elect at the Salina House as to be able to look back on the time when they toasted their shins before the wood stove, a cumbersome box of iron on four legs, giving off every moment of the day and night a pungent odour of burning maple. These were the ancient and honourables who knew that under the same roof there had been a period when nothing but open hearths, holding four-foot logs, welcomed the coming and speeded the parting guest. It seemed to them, and to some others as well, if the truth be known, that human nature could never get as close together as around a grate fire, or in lieu of that, a superheated stove elevated above the floor in a sand box, and enclosed by a foot-rail where congenial souls touched one another at their extremities. The very rattle

of the coals as it was being put on by the porters jarred the nerves of some of these and made them wish modern trespass on personal comfort would stop short at the doors of the Salina House. But the hotel had to keep pace with the times, people were saying, and it was certainly doing it. It was an establishment, too, where everything that fastidious taste demanded for the satisfaction of the inner man could be promptly supplied, and this in itself was an attraction to Dunbar, who boldly declared he did not want eternally to take his own medicine.

"Here's the old covey, now," was the greeting Dunbar received when he opened the door and stepped in. "Uncle Lew, we were just wondering what had become of you."

"It's sweet to be remembered," was Dunbar's rejoinder, "because I may quit you. I've got a gin-mill of my own to look after and may have to forsake these scenes of pleasure."

"So you are going to mix liquids with your solids to cheer the traveller on his way," remarked Capt. Bower, the rubicund boniface of the hotel, coming around from behind the semi-circular desk. "I thought you would add selling whiskey to the rest of your crimes, Lew, before you were hung."

“ Well, as to high morals I’m no great shakes, I know, but it does go agin my grain to bring my sufferin’ fellow man with dishonour to the grave ; but I’m in for it, for sure. But the eatin’-house is still a temple of temperance. If you would fill the flowin’ bowl under my direction you’ll have to come to the cave under Whitin’s Hall—down the long flight to per-dition.”

Dunbar was called on to explain, and he said that in order to save himself from financial loss, through a friend to whom he had injudiciously made a loan of money, he had been obliged that day to take under his own control a drinking saloon in town which had not enjoyed the best of reputations. It struck those who heard Dunbar tell of his latest venture that he was in a way trying to have it appear that he was ashamed to be in the business. This was something everybody could not understand, for a man whose versatile endeavours had touched at so many points might easily have gone behind a bar without danger of losing prestige. It was not then so apparent as it was later that Dunbar was adjusting his life to the higher ideals he conceived would be to the liking of his daughter. There was a stigma attached to saloon-keeping which was to be avoided if possible. The other

horn of the dilemma was to sacrifice his investment in the unlucky saloon, and this he felt just as unwilling to do, since with every loss or gain he now felt Grace was connected.

"You have taken a pretty hard hole, Uncle Lewis, haven't you?" asked Ezra Stuart, one of the regular habitués of the Salina House, "haven't you begun low down?"

"Struck the gulch at last," was Dunbar's laconic answer.

He was to take possession of the place the following day, and it was agreed that so far as was consistent with the comfort of his friends a helping hand should be stretched out to him in his distress. An adjournment to the hotel bar, where Dunbar played the host, bound this bargain.

There was among those who tested Dunbar's choice of a wine from the cellars of the Salina House a stranger to him and to the rest of the guests. This man had been stopping at the hotel for two or three days without becoming known or attempting to force his company upon the nightly assemblies of good fellows whose bantering talk enlivened the scene and served to make sojourn at the Salina House one of the things which spread its fame abroad. It was never felt by those who came to

the old hotel, and paid its prices for entertainment—some folks thought them fancy prices—that the residents of Salina who frequented its public rooms pre-empted their prerogatives. They, instead, universally expressed satisfaction in the relief that the evening sessions afforded to the usual dullness of hotel life.

At a respectful distance Ephraim Lull had been viewing this aspect of Salina, and he was alert to show his pleasure at the opportunity offered to mingle a little closer in it. Dunbar had invited him to join the party in a libation because he stood with his elbows on the desk, an apparently casual listener to the conversation which led up to the adjournment to the hotel bar. At first, when motioned by Dunbar to follow the procession, Lull demurred with a shake of the head that signified a polite declination of the courtesy, and he was only induced to accept the hospitality when Dunbar plucked him by the sleeve and said:

“Don’t be backward in comin’ forward, stranger. Sal-va-tion’s free to all. An unslaked thirst needs no introduction. Come one, come all.”

There was no mistaking the cordiality of the invitation, and Lull, laughingly saying he was never good at resisting temptation, dropped in behind

the rest. One or two others, no more a part of the company than Lull, also had a social glass with Dunbar under the same kind pressure. But Lull alone remained in the circle after the party returned to the radiance of the office; but the intercourse between those composing it was so informal, that no one took the trouble to inquire his name and he found no favourable opportunity for introducing himself. His identity was revealed in due time, however, when a boy approached and inquired :

“ Mr. Lull, do you want warm water in your room to-night ? ”

Lull bore his little part in the matching of wits which filled in the time that night. It did not fail of comment that when the talk turned to the question of horses, he pricked up his ears with livelier interest than he had previously shown. The hint thrown out that when it came to passing an infallible opinion on the latest nag to show his heels on the turnpike Lewis Dunbar was to be ranked second not even to Rysdyck, instantly caught Lull's notice. He edged over to Dunbar and asked if he knew where he could get a gentleman's roadster that had speed and style. This was enough. Dunbar and Lull came together like two particles of quicksilver let loose on a china plate.

"Say, mister," said Dunbar, "if you're in dead earnest this time, and really want suthin' spick and span in the line of horse-flesh, pre-haps we could manage to light on suthin' for you."

"Yes," was the interruption from the circle, "perhaps Mr. Dunbar would trade his pet horse for a few golden eagles. Eh, Lew?"

"Lady Montessor, you mean?" was Dunbar's question. "Not if the court knows itself, and it thinks it does."

"Is she a horse that would suit my purposes?" Lull inquired.

"Lady Montessor would suit the purposes of royalty, I tell you. She's out of Lord Derby's yard by the old blue hen. She's comin' fast, and before snow flies'll trot in two nuthin'. I tell you when she's let out the people on the road cry 'Murder!' and jump the fences. The man that owns her never owned a better."

"Would you part with her, Mr. Dunbar?" was Lull's question. The answer to it was that he did not care for money, but was willing to oblige a friend, and if the friend was as careless of monetary considerations as himself, they might come to terms on a pinch.

It followed, therefore, that before the friends sepa-

rated that night the impression was general that Lull's business in Salina was to look for a chestnut mare and that Dunbar would help him find one.

We shall see whether it was a horse of another colour which brought Lull to Salina.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOWER OF ROSES.

DUNBAR and Lull went driving the next day. Dunbar devoted the early morning to seeing what was to be done with his saloon property under Whiting's Hall to place it on a sound basis, or, as he said, in a position that would afford him something better than a tail hold. It was evident, Lull thought, when directed from the eating-house to call at the saloon, that Dunbar had found affairs there in a condition bordering on chaos, although nothing was said to that effect.

"I'm goin' to dig out of this ditch as soon as I can," Dunbar said. "I like to do business in higher latitudes, where the sun shines bright and the face of man is to be seen without lamp-light. I'm no cave dweller, and though the Bower of Roses—that's what I'm goin' to call the place—is a gold mine, I'm goin' to let some one else do the minin'. You mightn't be the man, eh?"

Lull promptly reassured Dunbar that his inclinations did not run in that direction; in fact, just at

present, he was anxious to try the mettle of his friend's horses. It was therefore arranged they should look over the best in the Dunbar stable early in the afternoon. When the men met by appointment in front of the Salina House a horse and conveyance quite in line with the fashion of the day were awaiting their use.

Lull's critical notice of the turn-out pleased Dunbar immensely. He forgot he had a white elephant on his hands in the form of the Bower of Roses.

"Lady Montessor, I suppose?" Lull remarked as he looked at the mare, which was showing every sign of ambition to be off on the road.

"That," said Dunbar, "is Lucretia Borgia, and I'm not ashamed to ask a judge of horses to get up behind her. There's nuthin' better on four feet. Look her over! Not a wart and not a pimple. Sound as a Mexican dollar in wind and limb, kind and gentle, velvet to the touch from forehead to fetlock, will stand without hitchin', is not afraid of the cars, a lady can drive her's well as a man, and she's as free from tricks as a lap dog. Man a-live, when there's dust flyin' on the road, you don't get a smitch of it."

"Then she has speed, as well as looks, Mr. Dunbar?"

"Speed? Hook Lucretia Borgia in light harness, put your bull pup up beside you, and give her her head on the Brewerton plank road, and she goes so fast the telegraph poles look like the teeth in a fine tooth comb, and don't you forget it. Jump in and hold your breath."

If the little mare failed to verify the good opinion her owner entertained of her, it was because she was not urged to her utmost, for after Dunbar had put her through her paces two or three times, showing a dexterity in handling the reins that did not miss Lull's attention, the conversation shifted to other themes than the merits of horseflesh. As quick of discernment as Dunbar usually was, he did not discover until he had returned Lull to the Salina House, that the afternoon had passed without bringing him any nearer a horse trade than when he started.

"I know what you've got and will think it over," Lull had said as he thanked Dunbar for a pleasant drive.

"Wonder what his lay is?" Dunbar thought, when later he took account of the afternoon. "Guess he's a ringer."

But Dunbar was obliged to confess he had not put in an altogether unprofitable afternoon. Lull

had made the time pass pleasantly. Lull on the other hand was sure he had accomplished something. Dunbar recalled how naturally he had been led into talking about the revenues of his business at the eating-house and in horses, not to mention his latest venture in a saloon, and how Lull had expressed surprise that such a circumscribed range of opportunity could possibly prove satisfactory to a man of Dunbar's parts. They had spoken earnestly of other enterprises in which bright intellects could engage, and without either of them knowing why, had agreed that nothing quite came up to the possibilities of the show business.

"You are cut out for it, Mr. Dunbar," Lull had said, "no one better. It struck me last night and I know it now."

The mare Dunbar had praised so highly was jogging along the road like a family horse on the way to the meeting-house. As Dunbar thought it over afterward he marvelled how his attention could have been so completely diverted from the subject in hand. He had taken a day off to sell a horse.

"If you could only get the right thing, Mr. Dunbar, just the right sort of thing, you could roll in money," Lull had said.

"Circus, eh? Dan Rice said so, too; wanted me

to be a king of the sawdust, or a Wild Man of Bor-ne-o, I disremember which, but here I am just plain Lew Dunbar with three meals a day and a downy couch to lay my weary head on."

Lull was not talking of a circus, he said, though Dunbar insisted on taking the mention of the subject as a cue on the strength of which he branched out into an animated dissertation upon the allurements marshalled by the snap of the ringmaster's whip. He had a story of Pop Whitaker, of ringmasters most famous; an anecdote of Levi J. North, arenic centaur of his day; a quip unspoken by Joe Pentland, the merriest of the clowns; in fact an endless fund of entertainment gathered from intimate acquaintance with all the celebrities of the circus of that day. Dunbar was free to say he regarded the sawdust ring as a wide space that worthy ambition could bustle in, the centre pole as the pivot around which human genius might revolve in quest of untold glory, and the tented space as a world by itself where virtue triumphed and wrong was punished; it was all this, he admitted, and more, but it was not for him to dominate such a scene, he said, and he put aside the proffered crown as Cæsar did before him.

While he rambled on in this way, Lull's measure

of the man fitted the better the pattern he had in mind, and in what followed he exhausted his best resources in a futile effort to enlist Dunbar's sympathy in the suggestion. It was little stronger than a suggestion from first to last. Dunbar knew, when he contemplated the net result of what had been said, that he had been sounded as to his willingness to join Lull—he felt sure he could go that far—in a business the exact nature of which had only been described by the use of the word “show.” He was really bothered to know what the talk was all about.

“Darn his buttons,” Dunbar said to himself, “why don’t he speak out in meetin’?”

He resolved, too, to press his new-made friend hard for an explanation of the mystery. As Lull suddenly left Salina, leaving word with the hotel people that he had been summoned away on urgent business and would renew communication with Dunbar at a future time, Dunbar did not have an immediate chance to put his plan into execution. He learned of Lull's departure the same night, when three or four of the frequenters of the Salina House dropped in on him, rather late, to see how things were going under Whiting's Hall. They were curious to know if anything like a horse trade

had come of the acquaintanceship. Dunbar dismissed their inquiries as cavalierly as he could, but kept to himself the fact that matters of a different tenour had intervened. He was hardly blameable for this show of reticence.

Dunbar had too many worries incidental to the widening of his responsibilities to brood over his unsatisfactory relations with Lull or to allow himself to regard them seriously for more than a few days. Besides, he was a man of sanguine temperament whose disposition to take things as they came saved him the pain of many a doubt that another less philosophical would have keenly felt.

"You dwell too long on one subject," he would often say to show his distaste for clinging to any phase of a discouragement.

So it happened when Lull returned to Salina, as he did on three or four occasions within as many months, that Dunbar made no pretence of asserting himself as he had originally designed. Lull never failed on each visit to see the eating-house keeper either at the hotel or at the next most convenient place, showing in this and other ways his desire to keep on closest terms of intimacy with him. On the very latest meeting between the two men, Lull had broadly hinted that there might come a time

when he might have a word to say to his friend that would be worth listening to. But the hint did not verge beyond this indefinite line. It struck Dunbar that Lull was deeply engrossed in a matter that made his comings and goings more than accidental. It was now past dispute that he was not looking for a chestnut mare.

Dunbar was dividing his time between the eating-house near the depot and the Bower of Roses, to the evident disadvantage of the longer established business. He needed not Lull's advice to sell out the saloon, and "be ready for a good opening in another line," to hurry him on toward release from the exactions of being a cave-dweller. As popular as he was he could not make the Bower of Roses a counter attraction to the Salina House. Convivial townsfolk, mostly of the younger sort, gave him a call, but their patronage, lacking regularity, fell short of what one had a right to expect. Then, too, he was neglecting his interests at the eating-house, and that was a risk he determined he could not afford to take. Nor had he been able to reconcile himself to the fact that he was a saloon keeper, though that was an aspect of the case nobody save Dunbar ever thought of.

One day Dunbar made the trip between Salina

and Canasango in as quick time as the railroad schedules of the day would permit. He beamed all over when he was back in the Bower of Roses that night, and properly to signalize the good fortune that had overtaken him, poured wine when a party of friends ordered a drink of less cost.

"We didn't order that, Lew," interposed Conductor Ashley, who was of the group, "but rather than see an old man suffer, we'll drink and pay for it."

"Drink's one thing; pay's another," was Dunbar's reply. "This is to be a gala night in the Bower of Roses. The golden bowl is broken"—and Dunbar tipped the foaming bottle—"and your Uncle Lew settles the damages."

"Your treat, eh?"

"Jest so. The jig is up and the monkey's in the box. Say your last farewell to the Bower of Roses. To-morrer it'll be a hole in the ground."

"Going to close her up?" put in the conductor.

"No, siree; got a customer who wants to be buried alive. Boys, with me—to the Bower of Roses." And the toast was passed.

There was natural curiosity to know who was to succeed Dunbar as the proprietor of the place, and how he had induced a purchaser to assume a load he had not been able to carry.

"Ever been to Canasango?" Dunbar inquired. "They grow pretty green there," and this was all he would say.

The next day and the next Dunbar was up to his ears in business, calling on every friend who was worthy of the title. He approached them one at a time; did not charge them in battalions, as he might have done. To each he repeated the announcement that he was about to sell the Bower of Roses, if, when the prospective purchaser arrived the following Wednesday, terms could be arranged. Dunbar was just passing, he said, and it had occurred to him on the instant that if a friend or two of his would drop into the Bower of Roses that day and order wine it would not have a tendency to bar the way to a satisfactory bargain! Of course, Dunbar added, as he tapped his boot-leg with the lath he carried, patronage under these circumstances, being in the line of friendship, would be at his expense. Dunbar was sure he had not gone too far in saying at Canasango that the Bower of Roses catered to and received only the best trade of the town, but it would be a kindness he would not forget if ocular proof of this avowal could be brought to the attention of the prospective customer!

"It would kind o' hail the conquerin' hero when he comes," Dunbar said.

So he went the rounds, and so it came about that the following Wednesday at the Bower of Roses was the red letter day in its history. There had been time for Dunbar's friends to discover that his invitation had been more or less sweeping, and with or without his consent, the plan he had so disingenuously conceived was taken out of his hands for development.

The eventful day found the prospective purchaser from Canasango on hand, reinforced by a friend, whom it was thought he was possibly going to take in as a partner. The strangers were taken under Dunbar's wing and put under the hypnotic spell of his eloquence.

"Don't talk your victims to death," Dunbar was advised.

"No," he replied, "I jest want to chain 'em to the spot."

Business at the Bower of Roses was brisker during the day than it ever had been in anybody's recollection. Indeed the oldest inhabitant, if the Bower of Roses had been in his rounds, could have recalled nothing like it. One after another the good fellows of the town dropped in, and on the slightest provocation ordered the choicest brands in stock. Wine flowed, as the saying went, like water.

Prompt payment seemed to be the rule. Tens and twenties were tossed out as if they were shimplasters. Money changed hands as if the Bower of Roses was a banking house. The wonder was that the prospective purchaser from Canasango, or his friend, did not notice that in these transactions the amounts handed back, while in bills of different denominations, were exactly the sums of the original tenders. Dunbar stood for a large part of the day with his elbows braced back against his bar, behind which two attendants, instead of one, were at work supplying the wants of the procession of customers. His face shone like a headlight. By and by he began to suspect that what he had intended to be a gentle incentive for the transfer of idle capital from Canasango to Salina was rapidly becoming a conspiracy to ruin him before he effected a sale. After the return of one crowd for the third time, he went over to their table and begged for mercy.

"Hold your horses, boys," he pleaded. "Don't draw on my wine cellar as if it was the long level of the Erie canal."

Dunbar could not stem the rising tide of popularity which surged that day at the Bower of Roses, and in the end was compelled to take flight to the eating-house, to the comparative quietude of

which he finally invited the two Canasangos in order that they might complete the bargain. It did not take all day for the principal in the transaction to conclude the Bower of Roses was everything it had been represented to be. Dunbar was pursued by his friends to the eating-house, where, being unable to call for wine, they devised the device of asking him for loans of fifty and one hundred dollars, varying these demands with requests for change for bank notes of large denominations, with the idea of conveying the notion that he was always in funds, as indeed was the truth. One borrower would hand the money received to a co-conspirator, who would then rush into the eating-house, and throw it down where Dunbar was sitting with a word of thanks for the loan of the week before.

The prospective purchaser went back to Canasango late in the afternoon with a bill of sale in his pocket. The amount paid for the Bower of Roses, its lease, fixtures, stock, etc., was never divulged by Dunbar, but inasmuch as he never whimpered over the lavish dispensation of hospitality which attended the sale, it was agreed he had driven a sharp bargain.

Before he went to bed that night Dunbar wrote

his daughter to tell her, not what he had done, but that he had consummated a sale of property out of the proceeds of which she was entitled to a share whenever she wanted it. This was the usual tenour of his letters to Grace, despite the intimation brought back to him by Father O'Horan that in a convent the least of a girl's wants is ready money.

CHAPTER VII.

A NIGHT AT THE HOTEL CLUB.

THE Salina House gained what the Bower of Roses had lost. Dunbar graced the scene with more frequency than had been his former habit, with the result that the evening sessions at the eating-house became periodical instead of regular, although he continued to do business at the old stand and to make it pay.

"My business is with the weary traveller," he said, in explaining how it was that he was a complacent observer of the changed conditions. "I so-licit no home trade."

This was uttered with a sly glance at the circle of his old cronies who had set out to badger him about what they asserted was loss of trade at the eating-house.

"My experience with these people in Salina," he continued, "is that you can get more into 'em than you can out of 'em." And he called as a witness Mine Host Bower, who, however, failed to come to his relief.

"You are a fair sample of the breed," he said, "and no one can say you don't shell out, Lew."

To this testimonial to his proverbial generosity—"Even when he hasn't a saloon to sell," interjected somebody—there was a chorus of cordial approval that made Dunbar toss his head with a proud swagger.

"Keep things goin' 's my motto," Dunbar went on. "Did you ever think how many good things there are in this world and how few we get of 'em? You're sure of nuthin' but what's on your back or in your stummick. I tell you, boys, if money was meant to be kept they wouldn't be makin' it round," and Dunbar sent a golden eagle whizzing across the floor on its chime. As he reclaimed the shining piece of money he added: "Did you see her roll?"

The crude optimism of this characteristic speech was being affirmed by the sound of laughter when the door of the office opened and in walked Ephraim Lull. As it was past the hour of the latest train to arrive from either direction in Salina his coming was in the nature of a surprise. Interest in his arrival was piqued, too, by his untidy appearance. He had evidently been driving over the country roads, which in October offered few fascinations

and many aggravations. Lull had been often enough at the Salina House since his first advent to entitle him to a warm welcome from the evening's company, and he accepted the greeting with a hand-shake around before he placed his name on the registry and went to his room. He was far from being a communicative individual, and it was therefore taken as an especially uncommon thing for him to remark that he expected to go straight to bed so as to be up betimes in the morning, as he was not further to prolong his stay. When he reached the door leading to the main hallway he beckoned to Dunbar, and when they were out of hearing, apologised for being in such a "devil of a hurry."

"Sorry not to have seen you when I was here yesterday," he said, "but better luck next time. Perhaps I can make a dollar for you, too. Good night."

When Dunbar resumed his chair in the charmed circle in the hotel office, he found a discussion in progress touching Lull's mission in Salina. The man had come and gone too often, without revealing his objective point, not to have excited the imagination of the frequenters of the tavern. It was no longer believed that Lull was in Salina in

quest of a chestnut mare. Dunbar was months before convinced of the same thing, but he had given up as a bad job any attempt to fathom the mystery. Yet he could not quite disabuse himself of the idea that in an inexplicable manner he would figure conspicuously in the solution.

The whole company centered a fire of inquiry on Dunbar and Capt. Bower in the hope of deriving the desired information. Dunbar said he was no fortune-teller, and suggested that any one who was particularly anxious to know Lull's business might cross with silver the next gypsy's hand he met. There was no more enlightenment in the landlord's response to the questions, drive them home as they would, on the theory that he ought to be familiar with the personal history of every guest he had.

"I have been wondering myself," Capt. Bower said, walking over into the group and stooping down as if about to be very confidential, "I have been wondering myself, if this mysterious stranger is not the man Sheriff Roberts is looking for in connection with the Savery case. Did it ever strike you he looked like a red-handed murderer?"

This bit of pleasantry at the expense of the inquisitive company effectually turned the conversation to the deeper mystery surrounding the killing

of Vincent Savery on his farm just on the northern outskirts of the town. The crime was now a week old and it was puzzling the authorities to find either the culprit or a motive. It was obviously the prevalent opinion in the community that the man's wife had a hand in the deed, but to that contention, unsupported as it was by known guilt, Dunbar raised violent objection. He was not ordinarily a bitter man, but in this instance he showed a side of his disposition which was new to most of his listeners.

Edgar Bartlett, who was often of the company at the Salina House, was there that night. He was the Lawyer Bartlett whose opinion was always cited in Salina disputes involving legal controversies, to the utter dismay of any one having a different view.

In Salina it was a perilous thing to combat what Lawyer Bartlett had to say. Lawyer Bartlett had been the District Attorney of the county and had made a record for himself which set him up in business as the foremost criminal lawyer of the section. In most of the murder cases tried since his term in that office, as well as some others of as much importance, Lawyer Bartlett had been for the defence, and no one better than he loved to recount what was believed to be the "inner history" of them.

It was at the expense of Lawyer Bartlett, by the way, that Dunbar had made an oft-repeated quip. The lawyer was ailing at the time, or thought he was, and was connecting the impairment of his health with the stupendous labour he had expended in trying to save the life of a murderer who had eventually paid the penalty of his crime on the gallows.

"I lost my health in that case," Bartlett had said.

"Yes," was Dunbar's sally, "and if I don't miss my guess your client lost his."

It was more than suspected that Lawyer Bartlett had never forgotten this deadly stab at his reputation, for if there was a man in Salina who did not regard Dunbar's witticisms as harmless it was Lawyer Bartlett. He was alert to see in the present opportunity an opening for a barbed speech. Dunbar had exposed a tender spot.

"You needn't tell us," Bartlett said when Dunbar had made it apparent how he stood in the Savery case, "what you think of any case where a woman is concerned. After the Arthur case I think it may be safely concluded that justice had better look elsewhere than to our friend Dunbar for uninfluenced expression."

It appeared from what ensued in the conversation

that there had been an accusation of murder against a Mrs. Arthur during Bartlett's term as District Attorney, and that on the trial Dunbar had sat in the jury box. The woman was now at large, no one knew where, having been pronounced guiltless after a sitting of the jury historical in its protract-edness. This rapid sketch of the case Bartlett had drawn, in order to bring the narrative up to the point of averring, with considerable asperity, the guilt of the accused, and declaring Dunbar to have been the wilful instrument of a vicious miscarriage of justice. It was plain that Bartlett was speaking with feeling, and that while he made the pretence of poking a little fun at his victim he aimed to belittle Dunbar's intelligence. The sting of the rebuke was in the thinly-veiled aspersion on Dunbar's failure to perform, without fear or favour, prejudice, or sentiment, the duties imposed on every citizen of the State when summoned to sit among a jury sworn to support the solemn mandate of the law. To shirk or slight this duty was deemed to be an odious disregard of a citizen's patriotic obligations. Dunbar manifested no sign of resentment under the assault save to stand up and face his tormentor, his thumbs in his arm-pits and his eyes a-twinkle.

"Now let me tell you what happened in that case," Bartlett continued. "I had made the best case of my official practice. Everybody said the woman was guilty."

"Not guilty was the verdict," put in Dunbar very dryly.

"Well everybody but our friend Dunbar."

"It takes twelve to make a verdict in this country," said Dunbar, and the assembled company saw the early development of a battle of quick wits.

"Yes, exactly," Bartlett went on. "When the jury first voted, the ballot stood eleven to one for conviction. Is that so, Mr. Dunbar?"

"Figures ap-prox-i-mately right," was the curt reply. Dunbar had resumed his seat, and the listeners had drawn their chairs closer.

"I say the vote was eleven to one. It's an old story now, so tell us the truth."

Bartlett looked sharp at Dunbar, who wiggled his cigar stump from one side of his mouth to the other, and answered:

"Good guess. Couldn't been better if you'd had your ear to the key-hole."

Bartlett's manner, falling as he did naturally into the cross-examining process, was tending to irritate Dunbar.

"Good guess, eh? And I venture the other guess that you were among those who voted for conviction at the beginning."

"I'd have to swear to that on a stack of Bibles as high as the liberty pole. Right you are."

"Well, it took the first day—yes, I think it was just a day—to bring the other fellow around to conviction. He was a butcher named Solzberg, and very stubborn."

"Stubborn's an army mule," Dunbar said.

"Glad to see you recognise the breed, Mr. Dunbar," the lawyer said, with an irony in his delivery of the words that did not miss fire.

"Know 'em to the bone," Dunbar remarked. "Back 'em when you want 'em to git ap. That's my way."

"Well, would you believe it, gentlemen," Bartlett resumed with a tragic air, "when the jury formally voted to find the woman guilty, after convincing that fool Solzberg, the ballot stood just where it was before: eleven to one. Who do you suppose voted for acquittal then, after all this foolishness?"

You would never have picked Dunbar for the culprit, but lo! he was the man, and Bartlett made announcement of it with melodramatic flourish.

"So far so good," Dunbar said when Bartlett

leaned back to enjoy what he thought would be his victim's discomfiture. Not succeeding in doing much beyond exciting the curiosity of the company in how the jury finally came to yield to Dunbar's way of thinking, Bartlett confessed himself stumped and ended his narrative by remarking that "white man is mighty unsartin."

Of course Dunbar was prodded vigorously for the missing explanation. And he was ready with it.

"I'm just an old sport, and of course don't know no more 'bout the law than a nanny goat, but if the blind goddess of justice don't want my 'pinion she can tend to her knittin' and let me go on my way rejoicin'. I couldn't see it, for the life of me, that the woman dealt the fatal blow. But I did see there was goin' to be a misdeal. I got wind of the fact early in the game that my boon companions on that jury were bound to string her up if they could. So I felt around for a place to tie to. Solzberg, the butcher boy, didn't like hangin' no how, and told me he wouldn't be budged. But they come down on him like a thousand of brick, and got him into a canter on the back stretch. But while he lasted, bless your heart, I jest made Rome howl with my cries for the blood of that mother of murderers. I said she was as guilty as a dog, and if worse come

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to worse, Lewis Dunbar, in the name of justice, would be the man to pull the rope to hang her. Then we all had a kind of town meetin' at which we agreed to use powerful pur-suasion on Solzberg, the butcher. I knew he was weakenin', and to brace him up, chimed in with him, when he spoke for himself. And he put in some good licks, too, did the butcher. I did some tall backin' and fillin' on my own account, and believe me or not, before they had talked Solzberg up to the hangin' point, five or six of 'em were whisperin' into my off ear that the butcher was more'n half right."

"Did you ever hear anything like it?" was Bartlett's question, as he figetted in his seat like one of his own victims under cross-examination. "No wonder crime flourishes under our very noses."

"Jest so," Dunbar said, going on with his recital. "Of all the brace games I ever got into in my varied ca-reer jury talkin' takes the palm. Did you ever serve your country doin' jury duty? No? Well, take my cue, and steer clear of it. Let yourself be locked into a dungeon with eleven good men and true and see if you don't say human nature's fuller of kinks than a pine knot. Well, as I was sayin', Lawyer Bartlett so gumfuzzled the jury that, without knowin' it, they were seein' ghosts.

It was pretty hard sleddin', you can better believe, for a humble citizen like your Uncle Lew tryin' to point the straight and narrow way to eleven misguided mortals. Bartlett's speech at the end of the trial had been as beautiful as a Fourth of July oration, the Con-stitution and the De-claration of Independence thrown in for good measure."

"But you seem to have won your case, Lew, as the verdict was not guilty," said a listener.

"Things did come my way, of course," replied Dunbar, "but think of puttin' in two days on the job! I could buy Flora Temple and have her sold agin in half the time."

"Two days?" interposed Bartlett, "you mean six days. It took six days to cheat the gallows of its deserts."

"Pre-haps you're right, seein' you put it that way—cheatin' the gallus of its de-serts. I had the jury buttoned up for Mrs. Arthur's acquittal in two."

"Then what in Heaven's name kept the jury out six days?" asked Bartlett, as he looked around with a self-satisfied grin.

"We were tryin' to fix the guilt, don't you understand?" Dunbar made answer. "You see by the time Solzberg caved in, and went over to the ma-jority, my faith in Mrs. Arthur's guilt was so un-

dermined I had to come out red-hot for acquittal. I'd been won over by Solzberg's arguments, d'y'u understand. The rest of 'em saw that to swing me loose from the hangin' side must have taken suthin' powerful, and so I jest hammered along those lines till one by one they saw the error of their ways and jined me. That's what took two days. Jest so soon's we de-cided that the prisoner at the bar was inno-cent, the question was who done the murder, if she didn't? It was a poser, too, and as we were all sworn good men and true to hunt crime down, we went at it like good citizens. Everybody saw how terrible a thing it would have been to have hung Mrs. Arthur, and everybody trembled to think how darn near we'd come to doin' it. And it was all through your elo-quence, Lawyer Bartlett. And would you believe it, they made up their minds a man who'd try to hang an inno-cent woman was as bad as any murderer, and I had all I could do tryin' to stop 'em bringin' in a verdict against *you* for attempted murder. That's why we stayed in retirement for the other four days. Whoopee! but it was a close shave for you!"

In the burst of hilarity at Bartlett's expense which followed this conclusion of the story, the lawyer took unceremonious flight. The way he

swung the door shut as he went out might have waked the dead. It did serve to make Ephraim Lull start from the half-doze in which he was counterfeiting sleep in his room immediately above the office. Lull was too nervous that night to go off into the deep slumber which was his wont.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CARDIFF GIANT.

THE stage which carried mail and passengers every day but Sunday between Salina and Cardiff came over the road the following morning at a rate of speed to attain which Doc Simon's pair of roans had hitherto been thought incapable. Doc Simon was pregnant with news. The telling of it at various points on the eight-mile route had occasioned more stops than usual, and as a consequence, each time when he whipped up his horses in order to hasten on, his two passengers were jolted harder than ever over the rough road.

The stage-driver's news when delivered in Salina, as it was almost before he got down from his seat in the mud-covered, canopy-top democrat wagon in front of the Kingman House, where he put up, made October 16, 1869, memorable in the county's history.

Doc Simon was, to be sure, blissfully innocent of the part he was playing in a great event, and as he was killed—poor fellow—two weeks later by being

thrown out of his wagon on his way home in a blinding snow storm, he died in the same state of woeful ignorance. But the stage-driver had been making the trip between Cardiff and Salina for "nigh onto twenty years, man and boy," without ever before having been able to bring into town a piece of news that Frank March, the "local" of the afternoon paper, thought a fair return for the free copy to which the Cardiff stage was deemed to be entitled. Cardiff had never developed as a news centre. All the way to Salina that morning Doc Simon had been enjoying the sensation he thought he would create when he told his friend, the "local" that a stone giant had been dug up on Stub Dewell's farm over on the west side of the valley. He fairly gloated at the prospect of being, for once, a welcome messenger to the newspaper office.

As the stage came through Doc Simon's lack of wonted volubility was commented on by the landlords at the wayside taverns. All he would say was that Stub Dewell had dug up a stone giant. He had to divulge this much of his news or he would have burst. But the best of it he saved for first deliverance as payment for the free copy of the paper.

When he went to the newspaper office, three steps

at a time up the stairs, he found the "local" in a doubting mood.

"I seen it myself last night," Simon cried out loud enough for the three printers in the next room to hear. "I seen it myself and know it's true. Stub took me an' Josh Wilson down where 'twas and by lantern we seen it. It's right down in the hole where they wuz diggin' for a barn foundation. They struck it yestiddy arternoon, abeout candle-light, and left it there. It's a big man fellow more'n sixteen feet tall, I reckon. Stub said they'd put no measure on it yit."

Such other particulars concerning the discovery of the stone giant as the stage-driver was able to furnish were drawn from him and embodied in an item which duly appeared in the day's issue, and for which Doc Simon waited long after his usual starting hour, much to the discomfort of the two ladies he had brought from Cardiff in the morning, and who were complaining to him he would not get them home with their parcels in time to get supper. Truth to tell, Simon was sorely disappointed that his news had not been given more prominence, but there was partial compensation in the fact that he found the story of the giant credited to "Doc Simon, the genial and popular proprietor of the Cardiff stage." He did

not divine that in this ingenious fashion the careful "local" had guarded his paper from responsibility for the reported discovery. The tail piece to the item to the effect that "the report lacks authentication" did not strike the stage-driver as it did other readers. Despite Mr. March's admonition to "keep his mouth shut" Simon had been unable entirely to resist the temptation to anticipate the issue of the paper, and had told his tidings to a number of curious listeners around town. In this way Dunbar had heard it, Simon having dropped into the eating-house as he often did, for a bite to eat.

At the Salina House that night a deal of incredulity was expressed regarding the giant story. Mr. March, who was supposed to know what there was of fact and fancy in it, professed to be unknowing of its truth except so far as he said Doc Simon, the stage-driver, was in deep earnest in giving the details. Yet the "local" was apparently of the Doubting Thomases. Dunbar, too, when he came in, was inclined to scout the idea that the stone man found on the Dewell farm was of pre-Adamite origin. This scientific allusion was of Lawyer Bartlett's invention, not Dunbar's. Dunbar called it a graven image, and suggested that as the owner of the farm could not get a crop of anything else out of the soil, he had

planted some old time rocks and was raising stone giants.

Al Whitman, who had recently been taken into partnership by Lawyer Bartlett, and had joined the crowd at the Salina House by his invitation, was a Cardiff boy. He indignantly resented the imputation that the Cardiff lands lacked fertility. There were no better farm lands in the state, he insisted.

"Good farm lands in Cardiff!" Dunbar replied, "good farm lands! Why I know a poor cuss out there who set out some tomato plants three years ago and they have never come up high enough for him to get hold of 'em with a pair of pinchers."

Whitman would have replied in kind to this libel on his natal soil, had he not been asked what he knew of Stub Dewell, on whose farm the discovery of the giant had been made. From what he said it was to be gathered that Dewell was of the every-day kind, neither sharper nor duller than the average of farmers who grubbed for a living all their lives in a place remote from enlightening influences. It was not to be suspected, Whitman said, that Dewell would have foresight enough to concoct a humbug.

"Guess you're right, young'un," put in Dunbar, "Barnums are about as short a crop in them diggin's as tomatoes. But it takes brains to get up

cherry - coloured cats and horses - with - their - heads - where - their - tails - ought - to - be. Hear me, there's a nigger in the fence in this business. When I go to Cardiff to-morrer I'm goin' to look under the rails for him."

"What takes you out there?" asked Conductor Ashley. "You certainly don't hope to make the giant a customer of the eating-house?"

"No," said Dunbar, "stone men have no digestion. But I've been around the Horn once or twice, and perhaps I've met the giant. Anyway I'm goin' to have a look at the peep-show."

The fun of a journey in the crisp October air, with Lewis Dunbar as a guide, hit the fancy of the assembled company, and it was agreed that as large a party as possible should be made up, to visit the giant the next day. Conductor Ashley said if Dunbar would hook up Lady Montessor and take him he would join the excursion.

"You haven't sold the mare to our friend Lull, have you, Lew?" the conductor inquired, a statement to which Dunbar merely nodded his assent, immediately thereafter making it convenient to lounge toward the hotel desk and in an undertone question Capt. Bower touching Lull's departure from the Salina House early that morning. It was evident Dun-

bar's imagination was beginning to work. But he kept his own counsel and went to bed filled with suspicion.

October could not have contributed a more perfect day than the next to make the invasion of Cardiff auspicious. There had been a flurry of snow during the night, but it melted away under the slanting sunlight, and without softening the roads gave the tires a surface that yielded nicely to the flying wheels in the rutted spots. Dunbar left Lady Montessor at home, but hitched a spanking pair to a double-seater and took in Mr. March and Capt. Bower, as well as Conductor Ashley. The "local" had come to the conclusion it was worth his while to leave his page to look after itself for a day while he went to the bottom of the giant story. It was his report of his findings, his faith in the authenticity of the discovery and his access to the telegraph wires, which set the world agog within a week afterwards. The Cardiff Giant became famous from end to end of the civilised globe.

The visit of Dunbar and his companions to the resting place of the giant was not productive of all the amusement which had been anticipated. Dunbar was in a meditative frame of mind, it was evident, and was too matter-of-fact in his contempla-

tion of the features and torso of the mass of stone laying in the pit in the Dewell barnyard. Not over a score of farmers, including three or four of their womenfolk, were spectators that day. They were enjoying the privilege of seeing the wonder of the age without paying the fees that subsequently filled the coffers of its exhibitors.

Dewell stood at Dunbar's elbow and he casually inquired :

"Goin' to make the folks pay to see this, eh, Dewell? There's a pot o' money in this-I should judge."

"That's what I've been thinkin'. My woman first put it into my head," was the reply, "and I shouldn't wonder if we'd put a tent over the giant and charge to come in. It's wuth something to look at, don't yeou think?"

"Wuth it?" Dunbar repeated, "of course it's wuth it. I know men who'd be as rich as Barnum if they had it. Lull is that kind of a man. Don't happen to be a-cquainted with Ephraim Lull, do you, Dewell?"

"Never hearn tell on him," was Dewell's brusque answer, as he turned on his heel, and walked away with Dunbar's eyes riveted on his broad back as if they would disintegrate every separate yarn in his homespun.

"You ought to get hold of Lull and have him take charge of the show," Dunbar shouted to Dewell a half hour later as he untied his horses at the fence and prepared for departure. "I'll send him out here if you say so?"

"Guess I'll go it 'lone," was Dewell's rejoinder. "Don't need no pardners."

"All right; no harm done in speakin'," Dunbar said, and then led the procession of carriages from town down the road toward Salina.

The question in Salina—and it was a question echoed around the world—was whether the Cardiff Giant was a petrified man, or a sculptured stone. The preponderance of opinion was in favour of a natural phenomenon. As Dunbar and his companions were the first of the thousands to see the giant at Cardiff they were plied with interrogatories that night, and the next, without end. People who rejected belief in the integrity of the exhibition that was now being made of the giant were rapidly being outnumbered by the believers. Dunbar, who at the outset was a bold dissenter, finally settled down to saying in reply to requests for his views:

"When that man walked, the earth trembled."

There were occasions on which he placed more emphasis on the word "when" than seemed necessary to the formulation of an unbiassed opinion.

It was not long before more people were coming to Salina in order to get to Cardiff than ever came to Salina with any other object in view. The constant travel back and forth wore the rough road smooth, and the letting of horses and carriages for the trip superseded salt-making as the leading industry of the town. Dunbar himself picked up a few honest dollars in carrying strangers to the scene of the discovery, and in that way found an excuse for repeated visits to what he had fallen into the habit of calling the "giant foundry."

The whole aspect of the Dewell farm had undergone a change in a few days. It had been transformed into a little village by itself, quite dwarfing in the briskness of the trade going on there the liveliest activity that Cardiff proper, situated a half mile across the bottom lands of the picturesque valley, had ever known. Yet the one hotel in Cardiff village was so thronged that the landlord and his family went to a neighbour's to stay. There was no other place of refuge thereabouts where visitors who wished to prolong their sojourn beyond the night could be harboured. These were the learned men from the colleges and scientific associations, whose inquiries did not end with a study of the giant's noble repose. They were investigating the

geological formations of the Cardiff valley, acquainting themselves with the history of the waterways in that region, and asking a thousand and one questions of the graybeards who were born and raised in Cardiff. In their train were a few newspaper correspondents, who stuck to the scientists, instead of making the trip to and from Salina every day, in the hope of getting first news of something that would establish beyond doubt the theory of petrification, or its opposite.

The day that Dunbar took Robert Hillyer, of *Harper's Weekly*, to Cardiff behind Lady Montresor, there were so many visitors to the Dewell farm that he was forced to hitch his horse in the angle of a rail fence a quarter of a mile distant from the tent which hid the giant from vulgar eyes. Led by Dunbar, the young artist dodged in and out among the arriving and departing conveyances to the gate of Dewell's dooryard, across which but a few steps was the flapped opening to the tent, where payment of fifty cents a head admitted the visitors. Hundreds of men and women were loitering about, stamping their feet to counteract the effects of the wintry air, or more forcibly repelling it by drinking hot coffee at the counters of the shanty-like structures which had sprung up along the

roadside where refreshment, liquid and solid, was being dispensed. The attendants of these establishments were boisterously crying their wares, in discordant rivalry with the shouts of vendors of photographs, who seemed to infest the place like vermin. "Here you have Cardiff Giant sandwiches!" was the burden of one exclamation; "Get the only true picture of the Giant!" was its reverberation. Variations of these cries, more than could be counted, came from all sides in efforts to dispose of all commodities that hungry, thirsty and curious humanity could possibly want.

Standing 'round—no other description so well accords with the picturesquely grotesque fact—standing 'round were groups of two and three Onondaga Indians from the State Reservation, a couple of miles away, only the squaws among whom suggested anything of aboriginal origin. Their petticoats of coloured flannel falling to the knees only showed that beneath they wore trousers and moccasins, both fantastically embroidered in beads, while over their heads and shoulders they wore shawls of gayest patterns from Scottish looms. Except for the unmistakably strong faces of their tribe, and the peculiar pose of inborn indolence which marked them in motion and in rest, these braves of the Six

Nations added no element of individuality to the picture that it did not derive from the presence of the hardy farm-folk passing to and fro in Stub Dewell's yard. An Indian mother carrying her papoose on her back in a swaddle slung around her forehead was really the only touch of realism which connected the past and present in the manner of Beadle's Dime Novels, which every boy in Cardiff, and probably some of their elders, held in such tender regard.

"Yes, siree, there you see the noble red man of the forest," Dunbar said, in reply to a question from Hillyer. "Too lazy to steal, too proud to work, they turn their backs on civil-i-sation except on circus day, when they come to town in all their glory and go back to their wigwams filled with pale face fire-water."

"They like the barbaric splendour of the circus—we are all more or less savage in that respect, Mr. Dunbar."

"I don't know what they like, mister—it ain't the circus, for they never go—they jest come to town on circus day, jest come to town. I'll bet you a bottle of wine not one of 'em's seen the giant since they've been takin' toll at the tent. They don't go to the circus."

Inquiry of the doortender justified Dunbar's sportive judgment of the Indian nature. Not an Onondaga had passed within the enclosure to see for himself if the stone man had once drowned the mighty thunders in their tongue or made their foe reel under the fearful descent of his majestic tomahawk. They simply stood 'round. There was bustle in the scene, but the noble red man was not part of it.

The spectacle presented apparently interested the young artist more than did the giant, and as of next importance, he asked to be introduced to Stub Dewell. With what struck Dunbar as marvellous dexterity Hillyer sketched the scene inside and outside the tent, and unknown to the discoverer of the giant, made a drawing that handed his physiognomy down to fame. In the cosmopolitan throng the artist picked out odd types of rural life, and placed them as a contrast beside the representatives of the higher civilisation of the cities. He did not, of course, miss a sketch of Dunbar, who religiously preserved the copy of the periodical containing it to show the most truthful likeness he ever had.

"It's going to take a week or two to get the meat out of this thing," Hillyer said to Dunbar as they took up their way for home that afternoon, "and if

you haven't anything better to do, Mr. Dunbar, I want to have you come out with me next time."

"While the light holds out to burn," Dunbar made answer, "the vilest sinner may re-turn."

It was plain to be seen that Dunbar and Hillyer had things in common in their make-up. The young artist sat up until midnight with Dunbar at the eating-house.

"There's not two of his kind in all the world," thought Hillyer as he turned out the gas in his room at the Salina House.

"I wonder what's become of Lull," was Dunbar's last drowsy thought as he lapsed into unconsciousness on his pillow.

CHAPTER IX.

FAST FRIENDS.

THE signs did not fail in the case of Lewis Dunbar and Robert Hillyer. They were fast friends in a week. Although the Salina House never before had as many famous autographs on its registry at one time, signed by men of note who had been brought from far and near by the loadstone at Cardiff, Dunbar found it more to his liking to spend his evenings at the eating-house in company with the young artist, and such others as knew no warmth as genial as abided within the compass of his smile. More than once emissaries from the hostelry had waited on Dunbar to urge him to come over and meet some distinguished guest, and as he did not always yield to these gentle persuasions, the distinguished guest was obliged to take the initiative. The parable of Mahomet and the mountain was never better symbolised.

It was agreed among Dunbar's cronies that he had made no mistake in showing so much favour for Hillyer. They all liked him. He fitted in. On that

point there was absolute acquiescence, and it meant a great deal, for every man who came that way did not meet the requirement. As young as the youngest of the little circle, Hillyer's years had been so prolific of experience that he sympathetically adjusted himself to their companionship, without letting down the bars to a degree of familiarity not fully justified by longer association. He had been pretty much all over the world, having always enjoyed the advantages of ample means, and without abusing any of them to the point of making his habits vices, had a sensible human love for most of the creature comforts. The bouquet of a good wine, the flavour of a good cigar, the taste of a good dish, not to omit the bloom of a lovely cheek, were of the things he fancied most.

"Uncle Lew is as good a judge of a man as he is of a horse," was the succinct way in which Dunbar's estimate of his new-made friend was summed up.

"This young pencil-pusher is a bully boy with a glass eye," was Dunbar's verbal record of his admiration.

The real secret of Dunbar's sudden liking for Hillyer was in no respect physiological. As a matter of fact it was purely geographical. The moment he found the young artist's home was in Brooklyn, his

heart went out to him with a warmth of interest that bothered Hillyer himself. Lewis Dunbar did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. For him nothing was easier than to put himself alongside his fellow man, on terms of lively sociability, but in the giving of his friendship he was apt to be more or less deliberate. In his wanderings he had learned to distinguish a hazard from a certainty. "Never bank on another man's game," he would say, and the warning applied as much to the bestowal of his friendships as to the making of his money ventures. But to Hillyer he was drawn by an impulse that he felt powerless to resist, and he marvelled at it.

"You live in Brooklyn, eh?" Dunbar had said. "The garden spot of the earth. I can tie to you, young fellow, and don't you forget it."

This enthusiasm over his place of residence was at first an unfathomable mystery to the artist. Brooklyn was not invariably in the good books of others than residents of that city. In fact most people who knew Hillyer, and did not live there, too, wondered why he should be camping out in Brooklyn when Elysium was at hand on the opposite shores of the East River.

The artist was not left to grope in the dark over-

long. Dunbar having drawn from him a picture of his home, where he lived with a widowed mother and two sisters, Dunbar's bond of affection for Brooklyn came to be revealed. He told Hillyer more of his own life than he had ever told to any man. Of his daughter, his love for her and his hopes for her future, he spoke as freely as ever did an indulgent father.

Hillyer knew the Convent of St. Mary's as well as he did the Post-Office building. The gilded cross was in plain sight of his own home. Dunbar felt the blood tingle in his finger tips when he heard this. There was, indeed, a tradition in Hillyer's family that the cross was in a way linked with his own destiny. The day he was born, in the month of June, the glint of the sunlight on one of the lustrous arms shone directly across a wooded park into the very room where joy and anguish mingled on a mother's brow. To her it was an omen that her baby son would fight the battle of life beneath its sacred shelter.

"My mother," said Hillyer, "is a blue Presbyterian, and on that account not very much interested in what the Catholics are doing in the world, but since I was a year old my birthday never passes without a bouquet being sent to the convent in her name.

It's strange that in all these years, as far as I know, we have never known an inmate of the convent. One of the sisters, the Mother Superior, I suppose, always acknowledges the bouquet in a note, but that's all. I'm glad to know about your daughter. I'll have my sisters call on her. You must give me a letter allowing the privilege, Mr. Dunbar. I suppose the usual rule in convents requires some sort of introduction."

Dunbar was a clumsy hand at letter-writing, but before Hillyer returned to the Salina House that night, he was in possession of the word of introduction. The artist's enlistment of sisterly interest in Grace Dunbar went forward by the next mail.

Dunbar was no longer thinking of the absence of Lull. He would have banished the Cardiff Giant from his mind altogether, perhaps, so completely had paternal longings taken possession of him, had not Hillyer called on him for occasional fulfilment of his promise to drive him out to Cardiff. It was not easy to be even indifferently indifferent to the reigning sensation. As big as he was the Cardiff Giant was in everybody's mouth. What is more, he was being swallowed whole. It was almost an unpardonable sin to array oneself against the theory of petrification. Thousands stood daily above the

pit on the Dewell farm in mutely pious wonder. The sole question at issue that remained to be seriously considered was whether public morals did not demand that the antedeluvian Titan be draped. For a day or two this concession to prudish opinion was extended by the exhibitors, but in the name of a broader civilisation this veil of prurient invention was presently once and for all discarded.

And the dollars kept rolling in in a golden stream.

At the Salina House the earning capacity of the giant was being discussed the last night Hillyer was to be in Salina. The artist had confessed to Dunbar that he had unnecessarily protracted his stay in the town a bit, the pictorial availability of the discovery at Cardiff having been exhausted at the end of a week. The giant's reign on earth had now reached its tenth day. Hillyer, besides sending on to his paper a number of finished drawings, was taking back note-books filled with sketches which he was satisfied he would find use for unless public interest in the giant flagged. Dunbar had been looking at this scratch work in the artist's room, while the latter collected his belongings into his portmanteau for the morrow's return.

"Not a cent less than a thousand dollars a day," Dunbar heard a voice say as they came down the stairs together.

"That's Lull," said Dunbar, stopping before he opened the door of the hotel office. "I thought it about time for the big casino to come out of the deck. Hold up, Hillyer."

Dunbar was holding the artist by the arm outside the door.

"Cut the receipts down to half that, say five hundred a day, and make allowances for bad weather," Lull was saying, "and you have a business worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year while it lasts."

"But they can't keep up that gait out there at Cardiff. If to-day's snow keeps on the giant'll be a dead cock in the pit," put in Capt. Bower.

"No doubt, no doubt," Lull continued, "but they told me there to-day the giant was going to be brought into town right off—just as soon as they can find a good place to show in."

An hour later, Lull having in the meantime got rid of the travel stains which came of his drive to Cardiff and back, he confided to Dunbar that he had offered to look around town for a suitable place of exhibition. He had taken pity, he said, on the countrymen who had the giant in charge, and did not seem half to appreciate what a gold mine they had struck. It would be a charitable deed, he

thought, to help them out, and he would not take it amiss if Dunbar would lend a hand.

"You've seen the giant, of course, Dunbar; and what do you think of it?"

"Think of him? Think of him?" Dunbar cried, putting his left hand on his hip and stretching the right upward at an angle of forty-five degrees. "That fellow came over in the Ark. He roamed the green wood before the Erie was dug. Shouldn't be sur-prised if he knew George Washing-ton. Anyway, for a yard-wide-all-wool-and-watershrunk-in-the-piece show I'll go my bottom dollar on the giant."

"Do you know, Dunbar, that I don't know what to think about it myself," Lull went on to say, "but I guess the best way's to believe the college men. I see they say the giant's undoubtedly a petrification. If it isn't, it's a mighty old statue, and a great curiosity anyway. I wish we owned it, Dunbar; we'd make ourselves comfortable for the rest of our lives, if we did."

Lull did not end his talk in good wishes. It had occurred to him, he said, since the owner of the giant was to bring it to town, that the person of all persons in this world who should show it was Dunbar. Then he set to wondering whether it would not be possible to bring his old friend—he thus

designated Dunbar—into the management of the exhibition. It must be obvious, he threw out as a casual observation, that such a man as Stub Dewell could not carry the thing through as an enterprise so deserving of skilful direction demanded. It ought to be glory enough for Dewell to be pointed out as the owner of the farm where the Cardiff Giant was exhumed, especially as the discovery bid fair to turn his stubble land into an Eldorado.

“I’d give a great deal to get my hands on the giant, Dunbar,” Lull added, as if the possibility was on his mind.

The two men were standing apart from the evening’s company in the hotel office during the conversation. What they were saying was pitched in a key low enough to make their voices inaudible to the nearest person in the room. Dunbar was not contributing his usual share to the conversation. He repeatedly nodded his head, but acknowledged afterward to Hillyer, to whom he told the substance of Lull’s suggestions, that he was actually stumped for words to guide the talk to a conclusion.

It is true, Dunbar did plump this question at Lull, as if he meant to knock him down with a stout cudgel :

“You’ve got Stub Dewell down fine. You knew him before?”

"But," Dunbar recounted subsequently to Hillyer, "he never turned a hair. He jest set me back in the race for runnin'. I was too fast; but I tell you one thing, you can't fool your uncle." And Dunbar's forefinger went to the point of his nose and his right eye drooped to a suggestive wink.

With their heads together over at the eating-house Dunbar and Hillyer settled down to the belief that Ephraim Lull knew more than he was telling. Whatever it was, he was seemingly inclined to divide his confidence with Dunbar. Everything pointed that way. Small wonder Hillyer was keen for an unravelling of the mystery, and an exposure of what he was already calling the humbuggery of the Cardiff Giant, if such a thing were possible as to connect the visits of Lull prior to the discovery with the event itself. To a certain extent Dunbar's ambition to render the world a like service was readily stirred by the young artist. Yet Dunbar understood from every phase of Lull's circumlocution that there was hope of reward for him in a fruition of Lull's plans.

Hillyer was on the point of indefinitely postponing his departure from Salina, as planned for the following day, but finally adhered to his programme, with the single modification, that instead of promis-

ing a return visit at some remotely future time, he now fixed it with definiteness. In the meantime neither he nor Dunbar was to lisp a syllable to a living soul touching the suspicion possessing them. They were to watch and wait.

Dunbar was glad enough—more than he felt it would be gracious to make manifest—that the artist was to spend a week or two at home in Brooklyn. It did not occur to Dunbar that Hillyer might himself offer the polite attentions previously assigned to his sisters; nor did Hillyer think of doing such a thing. The subject was mentioned, of course, by the two men, but with less heartiness, it struck Dunbar, than the artist had shown at the beginning, or as he recalled, before the antecedent relations of the Cardiff Giant had absorbed Hillyer. It was some consolation to Dunbar that Hillyer's good-bye was accompanied with a welcome promise of a return.

"I shall have some news of your daughter, Mr. Dunbar, from my sisters, and I hope you will have some for me from our mysterious friend."

"Even trade; nuthin' to boot; it's a go," Dunbar answered.

CHAPTER X.

THE BRIGHT SIDE.

NOTHING had ever happened in Salina to excite its population as did the events of the next few days. The Cardiff Giant was coming to town.

Through the kindly offices of Ephraim Lull a vacant store fronting on the principal square of Salina was selected, and Stub Dewell had come in to sign the lease, and make the first payment down, which he did from a roll of bills, the ponderous size of which was variously described in the day's gossip as equalling the circumference of an oyster keg or a telegraph pole. As the Cardiff farmer walked about town, he was well-nigh as much a subject of popular curiosity as the giant had proved. A man less modest than Dewell would have had his head turned.

Strangely enough Lull was not conspicuously in evidence in these transactions, nor did he stay to witness the removal of the fossil man from its subterranean pit in Cardiff to its elevated station in Salina. Dunbar naturally marvelled at this.

"Lyin' low, I guess," he said to himself.

This comment on Lull's ulterior designs, whatever they might be, was not altogether unjustified. Before leaving Salina Lull had sought out Dunbar, and with more directness than had hitherto characterised his communications had told the eating-house keeper in so many words if the giant did not lose its drawing power when brought to town, he proposed to get hold of an interest in it, with a view to taking it through the country, and, eventually to Europe. Lull was at pains to impress on Dunbar's mind that when the show business was discussed by them a few months before, he never thought so favourable an opportunity for a display of ability in that line would appear like magic right under his nose. Then Lull asked bluntly, whether Dunbar would join him in the enterprise, he to act as manager and Dunbar to do the talking at the show. As to the financial end of the arrangement, he said, that would be made very attractive.

After this interview Dunbar was left in no doubt that Lull was "in on the ground floor," although every word uttered was guardedly put, to make it appear that Lull was, up to the present, only calculating in prospective.

"It's too big a thing to be handled by a farmer," he said. "It's a gold mine if worked right, and it'll

take brains to do it. After we see how the giant catches hold when it's brought to town we'll know its value better. Then you'll hear from me."

This was Lull's assurance, and on the strength of it Dunbar set down in as good English as he could command in a letter to Hillyer a reassertion of his earnest belief that they were not far wrong in their suspicions that Lull's connection with the discovery of the giant antedated that event. This expression of belief was of sufficient importance, it seems, to induce Hillyer immediately to telegraph Dunbar to come to New York. "Come at once" were the words urging the journey on him. It was hardly necessary to have gone to this trouble, for Dunbar was only too anxious to respond. During the past year he had invented many excuses on his own account for going to New York, excuses he offered the Mother Superior at the convent as if it were incumbent on him to say anything save that he desired to see Grace. These trips he had sandwiched between three days, and had gone and returned, as a rule, before his friends missed him; or if they did he seldom deigned to explain his movements—in fact, never did more than remark that he had seen his daughter and found her happy in her new home. In this respect, at least, he fell short of his accustomed frankness of speech.

It was while Dunbar was away that the Cardiff Giant was brought to town. Rube Beals, the house-mover, the safe-mover, the heavy-lifter of Salina, was the hero of the exploit, for it was to him the work was assigned, and he was obliged to bring into requisition new tackle and new skill to accomplish the task. When he had safely landed the great mass of stone at the place of exhibition he was thought to have performed wonders. The removal took place at night, much to the disappointment of the thousands of people, who had hoped for a gratuitous sight of the giant during the transfer. As it was, the passage from Cardiff to Salina turned one night into day, every farmhouse en route showing lights as the procession of wagons went slowly by. It looked not unlike a circus caravan, the loaded derricks, great coils of rope, piles of pulley-blocks and similar paraphernalia making a more formidable array than the low-wheeled truck transporting the giant under a section of the tent which had sheltered it from wind and weather at the Dewell farm. The fact that human ingenuity and human strength were so taxed to effect the removal was cited as indubitable testimony to the verity of the discovery. The fossil man could never, it was said, have been deposited at Cardiff without having attracted notice,

and in all the country round there was no one who could testify to ever having seen unusual things going on at Stub Dewell's farm. Everybody agreed that Rube Beals had earned the thousand dollars paid him for bringing the giant to town.

By the time Dunbar reached New York, the papers were full of the Cardiff Giant. The correspondents were making the wires hum once the wires were easy of access. By invitation, and at the expense of the exhibitor, learned men were visiting Salina to examine the giant and pronounce upon its genuineness. Famous names without number were appearing on the endorsements. International reputations were staked on the soundness of these favourable opinions. The foremost of American sculptors, after a special view, had declared that if the Cardiff Giant was not a petrification, it was a statue from a master's hand, an example of art too ancient to admit of calculation. So it went from day to day. Rube Beals said the giant weighed not less than two tons. It began to look as if it would be worth its weight in gold.

This was the stone wall of evidence against which Dunbar and Hillyer were bold enough to buck their heads. It was to uphold himself in an adverse opinion which the artist had communicated to his

editor, that Dunbar had been called to New York.

"Say, younger," Dunbar had said to the artist at the Astor House the night of his arrival, when they sat down to dinner, "Lull's got the joker up his sleeve in this deal, but we haven't caught him stackin' the cards yet, have we? Let's feel our way. Never get down more hay than you can cock up."

"But he wants you to go into some sort of partnership, that's plain, and if you lead him on he will tell you more. It looks to me as if he went into the deal with Dewell, and now that the giant's turning out so well, is sick of the bargain and wants a better partner."

"Maybe," replied Dunbar, contemplatively. "Lull wasn't loafin' around Salina for nuthin' so long before they started the giant foundry. Perhaps if I did give him more rope, he'd hang himself, but he's a shrewd one, he is, and no mistake. But I don't want to play Hawkshaw the de-tective. It kinder goes agin my grain."

Hillyer suddenly made up his mind he was attempting to use his friend in a detestable manner. In his enthusiasm to unfold what he surmised to be the mystery of the Cardiff Giant, he had abused the friendly spirit in which Dunbar had met him, and

he was heartily ashamed of himself. Dunbar had exposed a new phase of his many-sided character. In proportion to the way he reprobated himself, Hillyer increased his good opinion of Dunbar. So they agreed to talk no more of the matter for the present.

"As I told you coming down in the stage," Hillyer said, "my sisters saw Miss Grace at the convent, and have invited her to take dinner with them. I forgot to mention, the Mother Superior seemed very pleased to have her come to us, so my sister said. The sister said—the sister at the convent, not my sister—the sister said she thought Miss Grace ought to see more of the world. A very sensible sort of a sister, eh, Uncle Lew?"

The artist had been calling his friend Uncle Lew for some time.

"The nuns are all right, my boy," was Dunbar's rejoinder. "I listen when they talk. The head one told me on one of my trips down last summer somethin' like what you've been sayin', and I haven't kept my old noddle goin' for nuthin'. Say, Pro-fessor"—in this fashion Dunbar addressed Hillyer when it was his wish to be particularly deferential—"where can I find some of those folks who hire out to take other folks to London and

Paris and Rome and that like? You know, young man, I want that gal of mine to have the best, and it don't matter what it costs. She'll have a chance to go plumb round the world if she wants to, and if there's a hole through the middle and any side trips, why that'll be part of the voyage. Pro-fessor, this world's not much better than a shake-down, but by payin' for it you can get some of the softer places to bunk in, and I'm locatin' the spots as well as I can for my gal."

Hillyer, in answer to the inquiry contained in this burst of paternal feeling, said there were several firms which ticketed and conducted European tours, and provided chaperonage for young girls who were obliged to travel alone. If Dunbar liked he would give the matter a little attention and report details later, an offer Dunbar received with pronounced gladness.

"It would be just the thing to send Miss Grace over next spring, Uncle Lew," Hillyer said, continuing the subject, "but why don't you go with her? My mother and sisters are going, and stranger things have happened than that I should in the end strike camp and go, too. We might put in a little time together there, and I could keep you off some of the rocks."

"Too old, my boy, too old. I've got B. C. on my back. Your Uncle Lew's no homebody, but he has seen about his share of the wicked world. Let the gal go, but as for me, I'm nailed down."

"Well, we'll see how things turn out," Hillyer said. "In the meantime let's plan another trip across the water—over the East River to Brooklyn. No date was fixed for the day Miss Grace was to dine with us, but with you down here the earlier the better. To-morrow we will go to the office and talk with my editor about the giant. I want him to know you, Uncle Lew, even if we can't convince him the stone man's a fraud. That won't take long. Then what do you say to dinner at my house to-morrow night, if Miss Grace can come?"

"Count me out, my boy, count me out. I'll just grind my molars here at the Astor. O, I'll make out, I'll make out."

"Dig out, you mean, Uncle Lew, and I won't have it. You've got to come to my house. My mother and the girls would never forgive me if I didn't bring you. I've talked you up, you know."

Dunbar persisted in refusing. Hillyer urged without avail. He finally fixed the dinner for the following evening, and said that if Miss Grace was permitted to come he would not take no for an

answer. Dunbar said nothing would budge him, and he was as good as his word, for Grace Dunbar was afforded her first glimpse of the world unsupported by her father's presence. It seemed to her the light would blind her. The simple life she had been leading in the convent was hardly the preparation for this violent experience. If the gentle sisters were right, every act of whose lives inculcated humility, and every form of whose admonitions frowned on display, then what Grace Dunbar saw within the walls of the Hillyer home was a defiance of their gracious teaching. Yet her heart leaped with joy, even when it trembled most, to find herself really a part of so much that seemed to her gorgeous, so much that looked grand, so much that was bright. After it was all over, and she had been escorted back to the convent by the artist and his younger sister, Beatrice Hillyer, she accused herself of having yielded too easily to wordly temptation. Yet she thought, and the thought was sweet beyond measure, that as far removed as were the lives of her new friends from the lives of the convent sisters, love, duty and devotion were seemingly as deeply rooted in one home as in the other. The holy teachings of the convent were no more strenuous on these points

than they were evident in the course of life, as she first witnessed it, of the Hillyers. But the same things took on different aspects from varying environments. Grace's immurement within cloistered walls had not lessened her powers of observation. For the time being they may have limited her initial grasp of things, but she was too much like her father to have any influence, however strong, curtail the scope of her natural intuitions. She was, therefore, confirmed in her opinion that life might be good, and true, and beautiful, in the holiest sense, even if it bore little or no likeness to that phase of it which predominated at St. Mary's. Nevertheless she was happy to be told by Sister Tesianna, her favourite at the convent, that this view was not unlovely or sinful.

"Our life, my child," the sister said, "is the best example we can make of unworldliness. But people who live in the world, dear, cannot do as we do. If they live righteously and do kind deeds to those less fortunate, their enjoyment of brighter things is pleasing in the sight of God, no doubt. You have shared with your good friends what they have to give. That is well, my child. You will learn the application of our wholesome precepts all in good time, and when you go from us, will, I hope and

pray, feel the lasting influence of our poor teachings. Pray God, they may have been better. I think, child, you are safe from the woeful sins of selfishness, sordid greed and, as wicked as anything, pride. I'm glad to have you see the brighter side of the world, and am glad you were made happy. I often wished that an opportunity had come sooner. Are you to go to your friends again?"

It was indeed the earnest wish of these friends that she should, with as little interval as possible. This had been a pressing invitation, and it was conveyed more formally to the Mother Superior in a note which Mrs. Hillyer addressed to the convent the next day.

It was true Grace had been pained by the absence of her father, especially when it had been made plain by Mr. Hillyer's frequent expressions of regret that urging on him had not been spared. She would not have liked Mr. Hillyer half as well had he not shown an affection for her father that was in a way akin to her own. Then again, she thought, why should he not? Who could know her father and not love him? Was he not noble, and gifted, and good, O, so good? Did not other men, all men who knew him, look up to him? Of this Grace was not quite sure from personal know-

ledge—she was true enough to herself to admit that—but she was firm in the belief that it must be so. Surely what Robert Hillyer said of her father served to build up the ideal father, the grandeur of whose character filled her soul with filial adoration. Keen as was her disappointment that he could not be with her and her entertainers that night, to speak for and be seen for himself, she felt nothing would have kept him away save affairs of vaster concern. Of these engrossing cares she spoke at table in fervent echoes of Dunbar's own drolleries.

“My father has so much to do, so very much,” Grace said, “he never knows where he is going to be the next day. That's why, Mrs. Hillyer, we don't have a home in Salina, where his business is, or most of it. But he says I shall have one some day, and then all that I've lost will be more than made up to me. Just as if I didn't know what he was doing is for the best. And I'm very happy at St. Mary's; the sisters are so good, and kind, and my studies are so pleasant. Yes, I am very happy.”

The radiant face of the young girl, a face undeniably lovely in its spirituelle cast, lighted up with the fire of her own enthusiasm. Out of her eyes there would have beamed a blaze of gladness, Hillyer thought to himself, had she not had a habit of

drooping the lids at just the most tantalising moments—a facial disorder due to convent training, he thought, yet a disorder which he wondered whether it would be permissible to cure, if a cure were immediately at hand. In those eyes, too, Hillyer saw the same merry light, which, more than anything else, made Lewis Dunbar’s visage dove-tail into his vocabulary.

As Beatrice walked back home with her brother from the convent, after leaving Grace at the door, it was agreed, and in their view Mrs. Hillyer and her eldest daughter, Anne, later coincided, that they had not misplaced their kindness.

“She is a continual surprise to me,” was Hillyer’s comment, “she is so like and unlike her father. Confound the old curmudgeon, I wish he had come so you could have seen them together.”

“Yes, we knew you have taken a great fancy to Mr. Dunbar,” Mrs. Hillyer remarked, putting her arms in motherly show of affection about her son, “but it needn’t be shared with his daughter, though I confess to have wondered how a man of just such experiences and—what shall I say—business, yes, business, that will do—could be the father of a girl as sweetly mannered as Miss Dunbar.”

“O, say now, mother,” replied the artist, “have

I painted my friend in such disagreeable colours? I didn't mean to. Do you suppose I would have asked him here to be with us if I didn't think his heart was in the right place?"

"No, Robert, no indeed, only I do not forget, as possibly you do, once in a while, that a Bohemian estimate of manhood doesn't always fit the usages of home life. If I have said anything which reflects on Mr. Dunbar you must take the blame, for you told us, you know, he was in some sort of a queer business in Salina, and that he was uncouth, eccentric, and had actually been a gambler on the Mississippi. Didn't you tell us all that, my son?"

"I told you all I knew about him, of course, as I was in duty bound to do, seeing I wished him to be a guest here, but I told no more than he acknowledged himself, and a man who tells as much truth as Mr. Dunbar is not very full of guile, I can tell you. And—"

"And on the strength of what you told me," Mrs. Hillyer promptly interrupted to say, "Mr. Dunbar would have been very welcome, and I have no doubt would have been as pleasant a person to entertain in our simple way as was his daughter, who, it cannot be denied, is exceedingly charming. She shall come as often as she likes, and her father,

without further defence, will find me a fond mother having unbounded faith in her son, even if by contact with the rough world he has grown a little liberal in his views."

By this time, this banter was enlivened by laughter all around, and Mrs. Hillyer was emphasising her reliance on her son in the oldest fashioned way.

"But Grace talks of Mr. Dunbar as if he were some man of eminence," said Beatrice. "Does she not know he is just whatever Robert says he is, a restaurant keeper, or something, in a country town? Did you see how her eyes glistened when she spoke of him?"

"I loved her for it, my dear," was Mrs. Hillyer's reply, with just the suggestion of motherly reproof in what she said.

"O, so did I, too," Beatrice made haste to add, "but I wondered if she was being deceived by her father. I began to think just now, not at the time, for then I didn't know what a truth-teller Mr. Dunbar was—"

"Come now, sister," the artist said, "that's a slap at me."

"Well, you said he told more truth than the rest of the men, didn't you? Didn't he, mother?"

"Yes, I did, and joking aside I meant every

word of it. But I guess Betty here has the secret. I see where Mr. Dunbar is hiding in the background for the sake of his daughter. He is perfectly wrapped up in her, would do anything for her, and may be playing a trifle on her convent innocence. I'm not quite sure, nor do I care, for if he is, so much the better father he is."

"We're not talking about fathers, are we?" Anne asked saucily. "I thought the conversation had drifted around to truth-tellers."

"Well, children all," Mrs. Hillyer said by way of amendment, "let's agree to change the subject to pillows and coverlids and good nights."

Abner, the butler, who turned out the lights as the family went up stairs, still with cheery words on their lips, said to himself :

"It's a happy family ; it's a very happy family."

CHAPTER XI.

HORSE TALK.

DUNBAR was punctually on hand the following morning to keep the appointment they had made at the publishing house, and in short order they were admitted to an audience with Hillyer's editor, in a building which seemed to Dunbar to be constructed of books, instead of bricks and mortar. Books, books, books, in barricades, loomed up in front of the artist and his companion as they went up the stairs.

"Climbing the tree of knowledge, I guess," was Dunbar's whispered remark, for he really seemed to be awed by the sight of so much wisdom between covers.

Mr. Fletcher, the editor, knew enough about Dunbar and the mission which brought him to New York, to make possible a rapid disposition of ordinary formalities. Hillyer had looked out for that. He had also warned Mr. Fletcher if he wanted to see his country visitor at the very best he must let the spirit of fun in the man move

him. As to the Cardiff Giant, and the likelihood of securing evidence of fraud in its origin, after a short talk Mr. Fletcher thought it would be well worth the while of the firm to take up the clue, and to that duty he promptly assigned the young artist. This was after Dunbar had made known to him the basis of his suspicions.

"You are a keen judge of human nature, Mr. Dunbar," Mr. Fletcher remarked, "and, without doing anything that would savour of betrayal of this man Lull, can be a material aid to Mr. Hillyer. I think as he does; the giant is turning out to be so profitable, there will be a disagreement over the ill-gotten gains between Lull and Dewell, and you know honest men get their dues when thieves fall out."

"But get your due-bag ready and turn thief when honest men fall out if swag is what you're after," was Dunbar's turn of the proverb. "And has it ever come to you that if you sit around waitin' for thieves to fall out you'll never get rich 'nough to be honest?"

Mr. Fletcher admitted he had been deceived by an old saw, and he chuckled over the revelation.

"I wanted to hear your story of Lull's apparent interest in the Cardiff Giant from your own lips,

Mr. Dunbar, so asked Mr. Hillyer to have you come. Whatever you do to assist him will not be forgotten. Do you know I have rather suspected Mr. Hillyer of needless anxiety in this matter, fearing his usual prudence and judgment had been offset by the pleasure he tells me he has had driving behind your horses. You know any man can be wheedled into the clutches of the very devil by the clatter of a clean pair of heels? I could, I know. You know something about horses?"

"I couldn't live in Salina if I didn't," Dunbar answered. "Everybody up our way has a nag to sell, and just to show I'm a good citizen, I buy 'em."

The conversation was taking the turn for which the artist had given the editor the cue. "Horse talk" was the order of the day.

"I've been the same kind of victim of designing men," remarked Mr. Fletcher. "I've often wondered if I dare foot up my losses on horses. Have you ever made a calculation, Mr. Dunbar?"

"Can't sum up for sour apples," Dunbar rejoined, "but the fust ready-reckoner who wants work I'll set him on the job. But I once had a buck-skin mare that cost me five thousand dollars to own."

"Must have been a trotter who went wrong, wasn't it?"

"No siree, just a gentleman's roader, of the dunghill breed, too, but a looker that would make an oil paintin' in a gold frame. I took the mare for a board bill. She come to town on a Wizard Oil wagon, and business not being very rushin' the wizards had to stub along the best they could with a sorrel geldin' hooked to the nigh side of the pole. I kinder saw suthin' in the mare, but it wasn't oats, and set the curry combs and her digestion to workin'. When she come out, after a week's groomin', it was with head and tail up like a steer in a cornfield. As it was good slippin' I tried her first to a cutter, and she per-formed so well I called her Snow Bird. The very first trip Corky Jack Mesmer, the one man in Salina who knows horses from the ground up, got his eyes onto her. Nuthin' do but he must have her. 'Any price' was the way he put it. But I wa'n't sellin'. Quotations on Snow Bird went up when folks hearn tell I had a mare Mesmer wanted and couldn't get. See the point? By and by I found the mare had her faults—the best of 'em have, Mr. Fletcher—and Snow Bird was a stamper."

"A stamper? What's a stamper, Mr. Dunbar?" asked the editor.

"A stamper's a horse that steps on your feet and knows when she does it. She had to be hitched from a step ladder. She had an aim in her hind feet that would have saved the battle of Bull Run. Half the hostlers in Salina are walkin' lame to-day 'cause they thought they knew how to hook her. Well, as Snow Bird was not much of a family horse and that was the kind I am always lookin' for, I made up my mind to let her go. I made a good trade for a piebald mare and a set of double harness with a harness-maker from Ca-millus. He come back two days later on a stretcher rigged on a pair of bob sleighs with Snow Bird trailin' behind. He said I cheated him, and if I didn't take the 'darned viper' back would show me how a justice's summons looked. Of course, I told him if he wa'n't perfectly satisfied with the deal the matter could be arranged. So we up and settled by me returnin' the piebald mare, which was nine years old; I to keep the double set of harness, which was bran' new.

"So Snow Bird comes back to home and mother, and the price of hired help in my barn goes up several notches. I saw the poor-house starin' me in the face if I didn't make a quick turn, so looked around for an openin'. We matched her next into

a livery team, and the pair of 'em looked so up and up when in front of a gooseback sleigh with red runnin' gear that I was paid my price and no questions asked. Down went \$175 into the toe of my stockin'. The next thing I knew I saw Snow Bird drivin' single in front of a milk cart. Then suthin' told me there had been a slaughter of innocents down in that livery stable. The keeper said months after that he didn't come back to me for a settlement 'cause he thought it wuth the price to have become in-ti-mately ac-quainted with a new kind of horse deviltry. It hurt my feelin's to see a mare of Snow Bird's breedin' and bringin' up ped-dlin' milk, so I struck a bargain for her at \$100, and the milkman went away with \$25 profit, enough to buy the latest pattern of suction pump. Snow Bird was once more under my roof. My barn boys began to love her with all her faults. I had her on my hands, and on the feet of my boys, for the next two weeks, I guess it was. Then 'long comes a doctor, who said Snow Bird was so like a mare his father used to drive he'd buy her if I'd sell for a decent figure. Then out Snow Bird went to heal the sick and bind up the wounds of the injured. I told the doctor I'd bought the mare for \$100 from a milkman, but that I ought to get the ben-

efit of my ex-perience in buyin' horses, and if he'd lay down \$150 he would be as good a man as his father. That was the ante this trip. Well, you can guess, if you're good at guessin', the doctor had a job in his family in which lin-i-ment and bandages were used. When he come to tell me about it, he didn't lay no blame onto me, but said of course such a horse was useless to him, and to obleege him I agreed to take Snow Bird into my barn till we could find a customer who did not object to a stamper. He said: 'Get what you can for him, Mr. Dunbar—and much obleeged.' I was sorry for the sawbones, and said I was man enough to give his money back, but he said I wa'n't to blame and had probably been as badly sold as he had."

"So you couldn't get rid of the beast even by offering to give the money back?" remarked the editor, who, to tell the truth, was wondering whether Dunbar was more fool than knave in the transactions.

"Get rid of Snow Bird! Get rid of Snow Bird!" Dunbar retorted with a show of surprise, "why darn her buttons I didn't want to."

"Didn't want to get rid of a stamper?"

"Not by a long shot, no. But I lost her, and that's where the dis-crep-ancy in the cash account

come in, as I told you to start with. That's where I lost my honest savin's—my five thousand."

"Tell us about it, Uncle Lew," interposed Hill-
yer, who had been enjoying the story as it went
along.

"That's what I'm at. After the doctor, I sold
Snow Bird to a young fellow who wanted to have
suthin' stylish to take his gal ridin' with. I closed
with him for a hundred, so the doctor was out only
a half hundred, and he thanked me as if I'd saved
his life. Back the buck-skin joker come, and—well,
to skip the fences, it was give and take in three or
four more deals, every one showin' a profit of from
\$25 to \$75. I tell you it was like findin' money.
Then what do you suppose happened? Down the
plank road comes a sucker from Slab City, a reg-u-
lar greenhorn, and buys Snow Bird off me for one
hundred dollars, and five tons of clover and timothy,
to be delivered as I wanted it."

"What did he do?"

"Do? darn his picture, he didn't do nuthin'. I
got the money and the hay, but *he* didn't come
back with Snow Bird. I've never seen the mare
since, and I was out five thousand dollars."

"How's that?" queried the editor. "I don't just
see where you lost. I haven't figured your profits

on the several transactions, but you must have made a pretty penny."

"Why, I was rakin' in the cash at the rate of fifty or seventy-five a clip, and if that Slab City stranger hadn't fooled me, Snow Bird'd have been doin' business at the old stand for a year or two. That Slab City chap was a highway robber, and no mistake. He had no claim to that mare. I had a patent right on her. She was a gen-u-ine stamper."

It was through no sign of Mr. Fletcher's impatience that the interview ended, as it shortly did, Dunbar having suddenly declared he must be going. Hillyer had not the heart to stop him, knowing he had planned a trip to the Convent of St. Mary's for the afternoon. The artist, too, was desirous for an opportunity to inform Dunbar of the pleasure that had come of his daughter's visit to the Hillyer home.

Mr. Fletcher was still chuckling loud enough to be heard by both men as Dunbar and Hillyer took the first steps down the stairs.

Dunbar did not tire of hearing his daughter's praises sung by the young artist. At lunch he would insist in picking out the best to be had and paying for it, though Hillyer tried to show him he

was the guest of the publishing house, having come down on its business. Perhaps it was because Hillyer was not slow in volunteering to say so much in favour of Grace that Dunbar did not once express concern as to the impression she created. He was only anxious to know if she appeared to be as well pleased with her entertainers as they were with her. Had the artist been thin-skinned he might have taken umbrage at this attempted reversal of the compliment bestowed.

"This morning at breakfast," Hillyer said, "we talked over at home a trip to Salina with me—when I go back, I mean—for a little party of friends, my mother and sisters included, to see the giant. It's certainly worth seeing as a gigantic fraud if not as an ancient wonder. What do you say to Miss Grace going?"

Dunbar shook his head.

"It will be a good chance for her to visit her old friends in Salina for three or four days," Hillyer urged.

Dunbar was still silent, and Hillyer continued:

"Our party will be nice people, all of them, and Miss Grace will be the guest of my sisters, and stay with them at the Salina House."

"Say, Pro-fessor," Dunbar finally said, rising from

his seat, and putting a booted foot on his chair, while he stretched his napkin across his elevated knee by the extreme corners, "we've got to take a fresh hold. We're not pullin' together, and I guess your Uncle Lew will have to have the gad laid on his back for jumpin' the track. Can't you see, Professor, I don't want my gal *ever* to go back to Salina?"

"Why not?"

"Can't you see if I did, I'd never buried her in that nunnery, instead of givin' her a home in Salina, the best money can buy? Can't you see that? Man a-live, Pro-fessor, I'm nuthin' much better than a piece of old hair cloth furniture, but if you touch me gently you'll find soft places, the places where the springs are. And you've jarred my insides hard, this time."

Hillyer, stung with mortification at what he saw he had done, would have offered abject apology had not Dunbar, by a sign, stopped him. The artist was instantly made aware of the fact that his old friend did not mean to be reproachful, and he concluded it best to allow Dunbar to go on uninterrupted.

"Salina's good 'nough for me, and for better men than me, too, and would suit my gal, maybe,

if Lewis Dunbar didn't live there. What I'm drivin' at, my boy, is this—the best I can do for her in Salina is to scratch gravel and wash out a few nuggets. But what would a gal like mine amount to there—Uncle Lew's gal Grace? O, I know I've had a fair deal, and hold some long suits, but don't you fool yourself into believin' I don't see how the game'll end. The best men in town give me the right hand of fellowship, and call me Uncle Lew, and if it comes to that, there's not a banker in Salina who wouldn't give me a lift if I went down. But Lewis Dunbar and Lewis Dunbar's gal ain't suckin' cider through the same straws. All these nice folks, who like your Uncle Lew so much, are good friends, but there's not one of 'em who ever did what you did when you wanted me to sit down at your table with your mother and sisters! You know what that means, my boy, don't you? Bless your heart, Pro-fessor, I'm not goin' to anybody's back door askin' for cold pieces, nor for kind words or buttered parsnips; no siree. But I can worry along without the things a gal like Grace would break her heart over. D'ye understand?"

"I do understand, old friend," replied Hillyer with feeling. "But don't you underestimate the value of your own popularity in your community?"

"That's jest what I don't do, Pro-fessor," answered Dunbar, "that's jest what I don't do. Why, my boy, if you lived in Salina you wouldn't have asked me to come to your house any more than—well, never mind who—let's say Tom, Dick or Harry of Salina. You speak of popularity, and I guess I've got it all right, but it ain't the kind of popularity to smooth the path of a young gal, and you can bet your boots, Grace is not goin' into the race of life han-di-capped by it."

Although Hillyer wanted, and honestly wanted, to resent the imputation touching the dinner invitation, he held his tongue, being too deeply impressed with the abstract soundness of his friend's philosophy to combat its application to prevailing social conditions.

The two men parted thinking more of each other than ever before—of that there was no doubt—Dunbar to visit his daughter and Hillyer to go to the work which he had to do before his return to Salina.

On the artist's desk was a slip of paper asking him to see Mr. Fletcher before he went away for the day.

"I only wanted to say," said the editor when Hillyer responded to the summons, "you've made

no mistake in that man. He'll make a book if rightly handled. He's just as original as you said he was. Mind you, it's not the easiest thing in the world to transplant a character from real life to fiction—indeed I think invention, pure invention, is easier, but were I in your place I would try my hand on him."

"Thank you, Mr. Fletcher," was Hillyer's reply. "I think I will, although I may make only a journeyman's job of it. But the more I see of him the more I'm taken with the idea."

"He's genuine, at least," the editor said, "and that's more than can be said of the Cardiff Giant. You've made the discovery; now see if you can develop it."

CHAPTER XII.

FOLLOWING A CLUE.

LEWIS DUNBAR came back to Salina with a picture in his mind's eye of a house built of brown stone, with balustraded steps of the same material leading to a pair of carved doors with frosted glass in the upper panels. It was like a score of other houses in the same street in Brooklyn, this house he had so accurately photographed, but so far as an exterior view of it could go, he flattered himself he knew its minutest detail. This was the house in which the Hillyers lived, and he had proceeded immediately thither from the convent, not so much to verify Grace's ecstasies as to learn what was her conception of an ideal home. He had patrolled the street in front of the house so many times, that a servant girl, engaged in sweeping the flagged area inside the iron wicket, foolishly thought she had struck up a flirtation with him.

Grace's descriptive gifts had been exhausted telling her father what the house looked like to her. It is feared she had conveyed to the parental mind

a picture of its interior arrangements more gorgeous than the facts justified. Owing to her inexperience her measurements of space and cost were apt to be slight exaggerations. Her girlish fancy of what untold wealth must be had been excited, no doubt, by the great mirror in a gold frame at the head of the drawing room, and the lustre of the crystal pendants which hung from the chandeliers. Dunbar had already made up his mind to inquire what such things could be bought for. The house itself, as he saw it, did not dismay him, as he knew a half dozen old homes in Salina which threw it into the shade. He was thinking it was more than possible he would be able to establish Grace as comfortably as the Hillyers, and he was joyous in the knowledge of what was her wish.

It had been arranged with the sisters at the convent that Grace was to enjoy the hospitality of her new friends as often as it was proffered, and he was not slow to take the hint that these opportunities to mingle with the world would require more attention to her wardrobe than it had hitherto received.

"You get sis whatever she wants in that line," Dunbar said to Sister Tesianna, who naively dropped the suggestion. "I want her to rag out

like the best. Here's a wad, and if you want more, don't be backward in comin' forward."

And Dunbar handed the sister a roll of bank bills he had been counting on his knee.

"We will not require as much as this," the sister said, but Dunbar compelled her to become the custodian of the deposit, with the remark :

"Keep the change. There's more where this come from."

It was not until a fortnight afterward that Dunbar was made aware of what good use had been made of his money through the foresight of Sister Tesianna, who had put Grace in the hands of the Misses Hillyer's dressmakers, in order that there might be no mistake. Sister Tesianna had been so absorbed in this obligation to her charge that the Mother Superior laughingly chaffed her about slipping away from her religious vows. Her reward may have been in Grace's letter to her father telling in the usual rhapsodies of girlhood what had been accomplished through his generosity. Certainly Dunbar, as little knowing as he was of the devices of feminine adornment, was never happier over the performance of a good deed. He was half sorry, in fact, that he had stood in the way of Grace visiting Salina with the Hillyers.

"I'd liked to have seen sis in her new togs," was his remark to himself. "She's the gal to wear the tail feathers of the lulu-bird."

But the Hillyers and their friends made the journey without Grace, and though Dunbar would have avoided them if possible—at least without offending the artist—it was upon him that a fair share of their entertainment devolved. During their three days' sojourn at the Salina House Hillyer virtually compelled Dunbar's attentions, a line of duty to which he devoted himself with utter disregard of his own comfort, once the artist had intimated that in this way he could repay the courtesies extended to his daughter. He had tendered his horses and his sleighs unreservedly to Hillyer, but wanted to be relieved of the responsibility of accompanying the party on their excursions. Hillyer, therefore, felt constrained to exact something more of his friend, and discovered a way through Dunbar's sense of obligation.

"It's hardly a square deal, as Dunbar would say," was Hillyer's comment on his own conduct, "but we can't do without our good genius. He's a bigger man in these parts than the giant."

It therefore came about that Dunbar was so busy with his friend that he did not much more than

learn that Lull was back in Salina. Mrs. Hillyer and the Misses Hillyer having said so many things that sustained Dunbar in his idolatry of his daughter, he even forgot to mention the matter to Hillyer at that time. When he did, it is suspected that the artist hurried his mother and sisters and their friends away. They had been numbered among thousands who were still coming and going in answer to the world-wide announcement of the discovery of the Cardiff Giant. It was as yet high treason in Salina to question the integrity of the discovery, as well it might be, seeing that every day strengthened the scientific affirmation of its genuineness.

Lull had taken no pains to see Dunbar. There were reasons, in fact, for thinking he had gone out of his way to avoid him. Dunbar and Hillyer tried to figure this out, and were at a loss to account for the change of front, when publication was made suddenly of the fact that the ownership of the Cardiff Giant had passed into the hands of a company of five men of known wealth in that part of the state. Dunbar and Hillyer saw the craft of Lull in this, or thought they did, especially as his own name did not appear in the transaction. The very first opportunity Dunbar had to talk with

Lull there was an air of abstraction about what was said which summarily ended hope of working out the mystery, if mystery there was, through Lull. Lull himself said he guessed nothing would come of their plan now that the business was in new hands.

"We were a little slow, I guess, Dunbar," was what Lull remarked. "Too bad, too, for the giant's a money-maker, a big money-maker."

"The graven image has struck oil for sure," Dunbar rejoined dryly.

Hillyer was rapidly coming to the conclusion that if he was to distinguish himself in the world it would not be as a detective, for barring a naked suspicion now so hopelessly entangled, he had been unable to make progress in any direction pointing to fraud. To himself, he admitted he was not just the man to pursue the necessary investigation, and when Dunbar told him so in plain words, he was sure of it.

"Pro-fessor," he said, "you're not cut out for a sleuth-hound. It takes a mean kind of man to be a de-tective, and, Pro-fessor, you're not that kind of man. If you was, you'd be after Lull hot foot; you'd know where he come from and where he's goin'. You'd track him down like an Injun from

hell to breakfast. Nobody knows much about the chap, but a de-tective would nail him to the cross. He used to be a tobacco grower out at Ly-sander, I know that, but he's been gone from these parts for three or four years, and where he was is the joker in this game. The thing would be to get a startin' point, the word 'go' as it were, and then you'd have him foul. You see you couldn't put the giant six feet underground out there without some one doin' some hard diggin'. If the giant is a ringer—and we think he is—there must have been more than Lull and Dewell who know it. What any man knows you can find out. It's human nature to want to tell. It ain't a secret when two know it. When more than two I'd jest as lief paste it on the court house door, or tell the parson. Now, my boy, the fellows who're goin' to let the cat out of the bag are the fellows who helped and hain't had a fair divvy. When they find out how much money it's makin' they'll squeal like stuck pigs. Mark my words there'll be some one on the gravel train with a story to tell. The thing's to find him fust. Fust come fust served, as they say."

"I know you're right as to myself," replied Hill-
yer, "and I believe you have hit it as to the only
chance of tracing the fraud. I'm going to think

over night on what you've said, and decide whether I'll return to New York or go on with the case, 'Go on with the case.' That sounds like a detective's lingo. I'm not quite sure whether I'm proud or sorry of my inclination to fall into the professional habit."

Lull was protracting his stay at the Salina House. Still no one save Dunbar and Hillyer connected his presence in town with the chief theme of everybody's conversation. He had no more, no less, to say about the Cardiff Giant than the rest of the people. Had he indeed refrained from discussing every new opinion he would have been quickly singled out for notice. There was no doubt Lull was well fixed in the good graces of the people he was meeting. He was not at a loss for words and spent his money with a free hand. Lately it was noted by the more observant that he was dispensing his favours more lavishly than usual. This had not escaped either Hillyer or Dunbar, and they wagged their heads knowingly over the fact. Indeed the artist's stay had been prolonged thereby, for coupled with this circumstance there had been a rumour, which Hillyer was detective enough to verify, that Lull had opened an account at the City Bank.

The artist laughed heartily with Dunbar over his

display of skill in making this discovery, and urged it as proof positive that Dunbar had underestimated his versatile powers.

"You know I've had my own checks cashed at the City Bank," he explained, "and it occurred to me to-day when I went there I'd try my hand at detective work. So when talking to the cashier, I casually remarked that Ephraim Lull was a friend of mine, and if he chanced to call and was not known I would speak for him. 'O, that's all right,' said the cashier, 'Mr. Lull has just opened an account with us,' and the cashier added it was a handsome one. So there you are, Uncle Lew—I'm not such a dunderhead as you thought."

"Quite right, my boy," replied Dunbar, "you know I've always stuck to the notion you couldn't tell what kind of wine you were drinkin' by readin' the label on the bottle."

A few days later a man walked into the Salina House and asked for Ephraim Lull, and when informed by Capt. Bower that the object of his inquiry had suddenly left the day before, bound which way he did not know, the inquirer swore a blue streak as an emphasis to the one word :

"Sloped !"

From the fact that the man asked the rates for

board and lodging at the Salina House, and when informed, did not seem satisfied to pay them, it was surmised by the landlord that another hotel would get his patronage. Capt. Bower having mentioned in a jovial way that night that some friend of Lull's, who did not have as plentiful a supply of spondulicks as Lull, had gone elsewhere, Hillyer was soon keen on the scent. To Dunbar he confided his latest clue (he so dignified it) with the suggestion that perhaps one of the conspirators had come to claim his share of the plunder. Dunbar, though he was primarily responsible for putting this idea in the artist's head, was not looking for such quick returns ; so he advised caution and deliberation.

" I don't see much blood on the face of the moon," was his comment, " but we'll take a stroll in the moonlight and keep our eyes peeled."

It was agreed that Dunbar should " mouse around " in quest of the stranger, and as he knew every nook and cranny of the town where there was a place to lay a head or get a bite to eat, he felt sure of finding his prey if prey was to be found.

It did not take long to locate Peter Aldinger of Chicago at the Mansion House, which like most hostelries of its name flagrantly belied its pretentious designation.

Once found, Hillyer was for taking the man in hand, and by threats, or bribery, or cajolery, forcing the truth from him.

"If the truth be in him let's have it out," was Hillyer's exclamation.

"If you tap him to-night," Dunbar said, "you'll get nuthin' but bug-juice."

"Drunk?" queried the artist.

"Drunk as a biled owl," was Dunbar's reply. "Soaked through and through like a brandied peach."

Dunbar had gone far enough, to assure himself that Aldinger was the strange man who had asked for Lull at the Salina House, and that fact having been ascertained, it was determined to make him the object of close scrutiny. Dunbar was for waiting to see whether the man showed further anxiety to see Lull, and that plan being agreeable to Hillyer, they contented themselves watching for his appearance at the Salina House. Aldinger, however, made no inquiries there for three days, though he remained at the Mansion House, and beyond imbibing freely of the local brands of liquid refreshment, apparently had no especial business in town. He had been to see the Cardiff Giant, but it did not appear he had taken more interest in the

exhibition than the average visitor. Dunbar, who was making it a habit to drop into the Mansion House nearly every evening, gathered this from off-hand inquiries. Dunbar had also struck up an acquaintance with Aldinger, and had brought Hill-yer word that if the man knew anything it would have to be dragged out of him with a yoke of oxen.

"I've cut my eye teeth, my boy, when it comes to horseflesh, human nature and pasteboards, and this fellow's a deep one. He won't blab less we get on his soft side. So to help the game along, Pro-fessor, I'm goin' to try the se-ductive power of Lewis Dunbar's doughnuts on him. If he resists 'em I'll give him up as a bad job and go out of the de-etective business."

"You mean, Uncle Lew?"

"I mean I'll tickle his palate with temptin' viands and good liquor and hope for the best."

The next day there was a deal of sport over the remark of a drunken man who, when he made himself obnoxious in the presence of the giant, had been forcibly ejected from the place of exhibition. He stood on the sidewalk laughing in tipsy fashion at the jeers of the urchins outside. What he said was printed in the afternoon by Mr. March, who heard it, and with journalistic instinct gave it record:

“Nice ol’ giant. Good fren’ o’ mine. Knew him i’ Chicago. Sen’ for me t’ come t’ see him. Be awful mad when h’ hears offish—offish—offishers put me out. Nice ol’ giant. Pete Aldinger’s giant’s uncle. Have a drink with me.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DETECTIVES.

THE pursuit of mystery was interrupted by a letter which the artist received from home. It was by no means an uncommon occurrence, this communication between Hillyer and his mother, for they maintained a correspondence which he proudly boasted had never been broken by a period longer than a week, even when he was at the uttermost ends of the earth. What made this particular letter important was the message it contained for Dunbar. It came, too, on the very day of the week that Dunbar invariably heard from Grace, and conveyed a message that ordinarily would have been the major part of her little budget of news. Grace had closed her letter with a carefully worded notification to her father that Mrs. Hillyer had manifested a new interest in her and would write fully regarding it to Mr. Hillyer.

"I've got something to tell you," Hillyer said when they met. "And I want you, Uncle Lew, to agree to what my mother proposes before I tell

you." And the artist tapped the letter on Dunbar's expansive shirt front just where the crown jewels were shining.

"You never need blindfold a horse 'cept to lead him out of a burnin' barn," was Dunbar's reply. "Better give me my head, and see what I'll do."

"Well," continued Hillyer, "you remember I promised to see what we could do about arranging a trip abroad for Miss Grace? It's all arranged if you say the word, and you're not the man I think you are if the plans don't suit. My mother and the girls are going over in the spring, and Miss Grace is going along with them. They've fixed the whole thing up, and I am commissioned to get your consent, as Miss Grace didn't like to ask you, fearing you might not want to have her away ten or twelve months."

Dunbar made as if he would say something, but Hillyer held the floor.

"You know this idea of sending her abroad was your own, and you can't object to it, unless you don't like the company of my mother and sisters. You won't say that, will you, Uncle Lew? No, you hadn't better. Mother writes that Miss Grace will be delighted to go, if you will let her, and my sisters say they'll never speak to you again if you

refuse. I don't see anything especially severe in that kind of punishment myself, but it's the way girls have, and if nothing else it measures the degree of their anxiety. They want Miss Grace to go with them."

Dunbar stood up and walked down the length of the eating-house. Though his back was turned, Hillyer saw his friend was brushing his face with a sweep of his hand, and there was a trace of moisture in his eyes when he came back. Dunbar was attempting to cover his retreat by getting a match with which he was ostentatiously lighting a cigar as he sat down again.

"My mother," Hillyer went on as if picking his words, "wanted to ask Miss Grace to travel with her and the girls as her guest, but I suggested she go with them—on her own account, paying her own way, to speak plainly. I thought, Uncle Lew, you would prefer it that way, although mother told me to tell you—and I promised—that it would be a great pleasure to take her as a guest. If you knew my mother you would know she meant it, every word. But I'm putting your feelings before her's, Uncle Lew, and if you'll only say yes and fit Miss Grace out for the trip we'll all be very happy."

"Sis can go all right," Dunbar said after he

again walked the length of the eating-house, "and I'd like to stand the shot for the party, if you'd have it that way. Sis would like to do it same as her old dad, and we wouldn't be even up then."

"I know, I know," put in Hillyer, "but that won't do at all, and we won't even talk about it. You won't let my mother do what would please her better than anything in the world—that is take Miss Grace as her guest—why should you propose the other thing."

"Back up, back up, my boy," Dunbar said with a motion of his hands as if he held a pair of reins. "What I want is to please your mother, and what she wants I want, and don't you forget it."

"Then why in Sam Hill don't you let my mother have her way in this little affair."

"Jest what I'm goin' to do, Pro-fessor. I know how your mother feels about it, and that ends it."

And in writing to his mother announcing the result of the interview, which he did with instant dispatch, Hillyer commented pleasantly on this new evidence of his friend's better nature, the finer sense of the man, which the artist admitted to his mother he was always ignoring only to have it recoil upon him to his utter chagrin. "As far as the cost of the trip goes," he wrote, "I know Mr. Dun-

bar would willingly pay it for all, and would think it an honour to do so, but as he felt, he knows you feel, and like a true gentleman, he chivalrously yields to you the satisfaction of doing a nice thing. I tell you, mother, you can never tell what is in a man till you put him to the test. This I learned long ago knocking about the world, but till I met Uncle Lew I never understood how ignorant I was. I am more and more fearful any attempt on my part to put him in a book will be a puny effort. I am wondering every day whether I dare go on with it."

As has been said, the pursuit of mystery was interrupted by these incidents. Dunbar could not, for several days after the plan for Grace's tour had been laid, get up interest in the whereabouts or antecedents of Aldinger. It was midwinter, and the Hillyers were not to sail until early May, yet Dunbar was as anxious to hurry the arrangements as if there had been an immediate call. He seemed to regard the question of preparation, too, as comparable only to the fitting out of an army. Hillyer found him rather extravagantly minded as to the possible expenditures necessary to be made, and had he not known that his sisters were looking after their guest's requirements, Hillyer would have been

fearful lest Dunbar had plunged into hopeless bankruptcy. The amount of money with which he proposed to provide his daughter, to cover incidental outlays, was so obviously beyond the necessities of the case, that Hillyer for the first time wondered how rich his friend might be. Dunbar had been volunteering more information regarding his financial condition than Hillyer had any inclination to hear. The eating-house he knew to be a paying venture, unpretentious though it was, for it was as busy a place as there was in Salina during most of the day. Dunbar had shown the artist how trade had thrived there during the war. A profit of \$200 and \$300 a day was not uncommon when Dunbar was feeding the soldiers, thousands of whom passed through Salina every day, on their way to the rendezvous at Elmira. It was very plain Dunbar had piled up a handsome surplus in those flush times. Although the eating-house was not as profitable now, as then, what Dunbar called "side issues" probably kept his bank account in good condition. His transactions in horseflesh were by no means a small element of his success, and besides, he so naturally took to trade that he was apt to deal in anything there was a dollar in.

"I usually turn up, my boy, wherever there's a

dollar that ain't nailed down," was the way Dunbar described his earning capacity. "I always take things as I find 'em, and it's a good rule, my boy, as long as you keep lookin' where things are to be found. If you're huntin' for worms don't go in when it rains."

"And talking about worms, Uncle Lew, it looks as if Aldinger had crawled into his hole," Hillyer remarked, flattering himself he was rather clever to bring the conversation around to the topic he meditated most. There had now been three or four days of inaction. "Can't we coax him out pretty soon?"

"I thought we'd wait till it begun to rain," which was Dunbar's way of saying he did not deem the time opportune to go fraud hunting.

"But we mustn't wait until we're all dead and buried," Hillyer replied, partly by way of a joke and partly by way of rebuke for what appeared to him needless delay.

"You can never tell what's good for you," Dunbar answered. "Death and burial come in handy sometimes. Did I ever tell you about Strawberry Mansion? It's out here on the Pump House road where the birds sing and the flowers bloom. Everything to please the most fastidious. There's a

Lover's Leap and an Ice Cave. Talk about your var-i-able climates, it was so hot in winter near the Lover's Leap you could boil eggs in the tricklin' water, and so cold in the Ice Cave in midsummer it froze the wick of a lighted candle. But the sulphur spring was what caught your Uncle Lew. When I took up my abode there the bubblin' fountain was so strong of brimstone that it made a match smell like ottar of roses. It would cure anybody of anything from gangrene to gluttony, and would make hair grow on the weather side of a brass door-knob. A fellow come there early in the game with the seven years' itch and went away with four years' salary. We had more cases of this kind than you could shake a stick at. I couldn't keep the people away with a club, at fust, but anon a ve-loc-i-pede school in town killed the trick for the Lover's Leap, and a cold spell in the dog days put the Ice Cave out of business. Then the sulphur spring gave out and ruin stared me in the face. You see Strawberry Mansion was at the base of a gentle slope which was used as a graveyard by the yarb growers of Vinegar Hill. But it was just my luck to have the buryin' stop the year I come, and that settled it, for the year after the sulphur spring down in the holler was as pure and fresh as a milkman's well.

No cadavers on the hillside, no miner-al in the spring. So I sold Strawberry Mansion for a sweat-leather from a Kossuth hat and went back among the livin'. But there's worse things than havin' people turn up their toes to the daisies. D'ye see?"

Having delivered himself of this little reminiscence, the effect of which was to throw Hillyer into better humour, Dunbar consented to return to a consideration of Aldinger's possible connection with the Cardiff Giant. Dunbar said he had been hopeful Lull would turn up, and that it would then develop whether Aldinger's coming to Salina had any thing to do with the giant, a very important matter, according to Dunbar, and one which he strongly intimated Hillyer was overlooking.

"We are puttin' up our good money on the blind," he said, "and while that's sporty, my boy, it ain't a sure go. I've found out only one thing 'bout this fellow, and I've kept it to myself, for if I'd have peeped to you, you'd have gone off the handle."

"What is it, Uncle Lew?"

"If you'll keep your shirt on I'll give you the interestin' details. This fellow from Chicago's a stone-cutter, a knight of the chisel, as it were."

"O, ho," exclaimed the other, "a stone-cutter!

Could he have carved the giant? No, hardly, Uncle Lew; it doesn't sound reasonable."

"Darned if I know what he's carved, but he's a stone-cutter, and so far so good. If he'd been a butcher or a tight-rope walker he wouldn't have fitted into our game for a red cent, but bein' a carver of some kind, we've got a peg to hang our hat on, haven't we?"

"I see the point, Uncle Lew, but you know everybody is saying even if the giant isn't a petrification, it's an ancient statue."

"Pre-haps," put in Dunbar, "pre-haps. But hear me, my boy, a brace game's a brace game. The nearest I ever come to goin' to college was to have a doctor cash in his di-ploma in a no-limit poker game in Cairo, Illinois; but there are some things you can't get out of books, and that college pro-fessors give the go-by, and one of 'em's the noble art of hocus-pocus. Now if you and me's called the turn on Lull, this hunk of granite's a fraud through and through. That statue notion don't go down."

And Dunbar was on his feet, his beaver hat tipped over his ear and his thumbs in their accustomed places in the arm-holes of his vest, the very personification of knowing worldliness.

"You're talking, Uncle Lew," was what Hillyer said in a tone that unmistakably meant approval.

"Well, yes, I'm talkin' like a Dutch uncle, my boy, and I'm a Dutchman if I ain't right."

"Then you think Aldinger may have had a hand in turning out—in carving the giant?" asked the artist.

"Let's see how many cards he draws, and make the stake accordin'. That's my way."

"You mean?" said Hillyer suggestively.

"I'm jest about ready to say, Lull havin' made himself scarce, and not havin' sent us his address, so's we can't keep him posted on what we're doin', we'll take this son-of-a-sea-cook from Chicago in tow, and see what he's made of. As long as we're goin' to be de-tectives we might as well go the whole hog."

Strange to say, it was in this way the world got its first inkling of how monstrously it had been humbugged by the Cardiff Giant. That the world did not learn the details of the great fraud was due to what Lewis Dunbar called Robert Hillyer's "Bible back."

CHAPTER XIV.

"A BIBLE BACK."

"It's worth a good deal to me, Uncle Lew, to know we were on the right track from the first, and if I haven't wasted *your* time, I leave Salina just as well satisfied as if I'd ripped the country wide open with an exposure of the fraud. I've been fully repaid, more than repaid, by knowing you, Uncle Lew."

"Glad to hear you say so, my boy, glad to hear you say so. But with the tools in your hands you ought to blow the thing out of water."

"Now don't mistake me for a saint—for there's no halo encircling my forehead—but I guess you were right when you said I was a Bible back. I can't quite work myself up to taking such an advantage of a drunken man. Now let's let up on the giant and talk about pleasanter things."

And the conversation Dunbar and Hillyer were having in the depot while waiting the departure of the New York train was turned to the present prospect of the artist seeing Grace Dunbar and the

friends she had made in Brooklyn. On many accounts Dunbar was not averse to changing the trend of their farewell interview. On any pretext, on any occasion, he would talk with the artist about his daughter. It was a joyful gratification of the one emotion that controlled him. Then again, he was not satisfied that Hillyer had dealt justly by himself in failing, when the way was open, to make himself famous as the exposé of the Cardiff Giant. The two men had debated the right and wrong of the subject for days before Hillyer decided to return to his work in New York with the object of his quest in Salina unfulfilled.

The plans laid to uncover the mystery surrounding the giant and its origin had borne fruit. The stone-cutter from Chicago had proved to be a veritable mine of information. Exasperated by what Aldinger came to believe was the double-dealing of Ephraim Lull, he had been led by degrees to unbosom himself touching the conception and execution of the humbug, in about equal proportions to the amount of liquor with which he was plied. When once taken in hand by Dunbar, Aldinger's inordinate thirst had, it may be remarked, scant chances to go unquenched.

"If Ken-tucky ain't as dry as the Sa-hara desert it

ain't my fault," Dunbar said. "He's swilled enough rot-gut to float the *Great Eastern*."

The investigators were in possession of the whole story. It was drawn from the stone-cutter without apparent compunction of conscience on the part of either Dunbar or Hillyer. Having obtained it, however, the artist was suddenly stricken with remorse, and declared that unless Aldinger sober volunteered to verify Aldinger drunk he would take no part in its public exploitation. Hillyer did not wait for his ally in the business to chide him for so tardily coming to this conclusion. He was candid enough to admit his conduct had been especially bad, in that if he had scruples at all, they should have manifested themselves at the outset. Dunbar's position in the premises was that they had resorted to methods of inquiry legitimately within the line of detective duty. As detectives, it was his contention, they were privileged to use the information they had extorted from their victim, without feeling a single qualm—as detectives. As a gentleman, he said, he might take a different view.

"My boy," Dunbar argued at the beginning, "in this wicked world a man has to be fish, flesh or fowl, or good red herring. You can't hook a de-tective and a gentleman in double harness and make 'em

travel together; they won't look nor act alike, no matter how high you check 'em. Hear me! It's a nasty business we're in, my boy, and as long's we're in it we're just as nasty. There you have it straight. We mustn't think of what we're doin' 'cept as de-tectives. I know, my boy, my kind of a life—the rough and tumble kind—hasn't made me as par-ticular as you are, maybe, but I've learned if you're goin' to win you must play all the cards dealt you. Never lay down a hand because the parson's lookin' over your shoulder. Don't be a dy-speptic at a barbecue. A de-tective with the conscience of a gentleman ain't no better."

But Hillyer resisted the force of this logic, and as a last resort attempted to justify the devices employed to betray Aldinger into a confession, by taking the man in a lucid interval and urging him to make a clean breast of his part in the perpetration of the gigantic fraud. What might have been the result of this appeal to his honour, had not Lull appeared on the scene the day previous, cannot be conjectured; but as things turned out, the stone-cutter not only refused to pose as a penitent, but brazenly denied ever having said a word that could possibly be construed to signify knowledge of the giant. As circumstantial as his recital had been,

considering his befuddled brain, he repudiated every word of it, and intimated it was the creation of the artist's own imagination, excited, as the stone-cutter was impudent enough to suggest, by over-indulgence in intoxicating drink! At this point, it is true, Hillyer's sentimental resolve not to make use of Aldinger's bibulous confidence wavered to the extent that he threatened to expose the giant by following it step by step from the spot where the gypsum block was quarried to the day it was buried in Cardiff. This he could easily do, he declared, by pursuing the clues the drunken stone-cutter had furnished him. Aldinger, besotted as he was, had sufficient wit left to discern the danger of this investigation, and while stoutly denying personal participation in the manufacture of the giant, beseeched Hillyer not to follow this course. What he knew of the giant he had agreed to keep to himself for a price Lull was to pay, and to cheat him out of it by making him wild with whiskey was unfair, he urged.

"All of us have a soft side," was Dunbar's comment on the outcome of this interview, "and this rum-guzzler's struck your'n, I guess."

"I guess so," Hillyer made answer.

"But you won't mind, will you," Dunbar had said, "if I have a little game of freeze-out with the

giant? I'd kinder like to smoke out the coon if it's in the pins. It's my nature, you know, when I shy my castor into the ring to go in after it. I want to do it jest for fun, jest for fun."

Hillyer was quick to discern that his old friend's inclination to go to the bottom of things had been piqued. Not standing in awe of the proprieties which were dictating Hillyer's abandonment of the quest they had entered on, Dunbar proposed to pursue it to a conclusion simply as a matter of personal justification, and Hillyer recognised no right to express himself of a contrary mind.

"Of course, Uncle Lew, I can't stand in the way of that, nor do I wish to. I confess I'd like to know myself whether Aldinger's strange story is even half truth. If it prove to be so, some day—not now—it will be worth telling, well worth it."

This explained why Dunbar and Hillyer disappeared from Salina almost to a day. Dunbar was not a man to let grass grow under his feet. To the setting sun he turned his face within the week, ticketed to Buffalo, as it was promptly reported at the Salina House, but in reality bound for Chicago and beyond. The ticket agent did not know this or he would have told it. Through him the destinations of departing residents were never left a subject of much doubt in Salina.

When Dunbar three weeks later was back in his accustomed places he accounted for his absence by saying he had been coon-hunting, and he added, he had a pelt or two drying on his barn-door to testify to the success of his expedition.

"They're runnin' pretty big this year, coons be," Dunbar went on to say, "and b'lieve me or not, the best huntin' I had was in a stone-yard in Chicago."

He was regaling a group of friends at the Salina House, and this was the first intimation they had had, that his journey had extended so far. To the inquiries which this information elicited Dunbar admitted his wanderings had been even longer.

"I've been far off the beaten track," he said. "I've been on the boundless wastes of Ioway, where the festive prairie dog coos for his mate and the jumpin' gopher calls you for breakfast in the dewy mornin'. It was kind o' 'Pike's peak or bust' with your Uncle Lew on this trip."

But the story he could have told he kept locked in his breast. It came to Hillyer's ears in due time, but to no other's.

"I wanted to get down to hard-pan at the start-off," Dunbar said when the artist was listening a month later in New York. Dunbar had made the trip to unfold his tale. "Well," he continued, "I

went straight as a die for that parson in Ioway—the fellow Aldinger told us Lull had talked with about the giants in the Bible. He said the fellow lived at Ackley, but when I got there, he'd moved on to 'nother place. I got my bearin's and went after him. It's all true what Aldinger said, for the parson gave me the same lingo. Turck, that's his name, and things go along so slow up his way they don't know there's a Cardiff Giant; don't know the war's over, I guess. Turck knew Lull; met him at the house of a poor devil who was dyin' of gallopin' consumption, who Lull was nursin', not havin' anythin' else on hand to kill time. The parson read the Bible to the fellow on his back, and Lull had to listen, leastwise he did, and that started the guff about the giants. The parson showed me the parts of the Bible where it says giants lived in those days, but I didn't think it much account, and didn't make a re-cord of it. But I guess them two had it hot and heavy over the giant business, Lull sayin' he didn't go a cent on the yarn, and the parson stickin' up for the Bible like a good fellow. Then Lull up and says to the psalm-singer, so Turck says: 'Do you think folks now-a-days would b'lieve such a ghost story as that?' And the parson says he knows they would; 'cause why, the

bones of some of them Bible giants have been dug up ; and Lull he says he knows that, and he tells the parson he b'lieves the Bible, every word of it. So the sick man dies of gallopin' con-sumption and Lull goes into the giant business."

"Odd, very odd," Hillyer broke in as he roused himself from the meditative attitude of an absorbed listener. "Just think that what is without question the gigantic fraud of the century, had its inception, its origin, in such simple faith. The scientific world hoaxed by the belief of a backwoods minister ! And Lull—all we can say for him is, he wears the livery of the Lord to serve the devil in."

"Queer world, ain't it ?" Dunbar said in a tone that showed him to be less astonished than his young friend.

"I'm finding it so, the longer I live," Hillyer answered.

"So much for the Bible story," Dunbar continued, "and that ain't all that's queer, you bet. You remember what Aldinger told us about the trouble Lull and his pardners had in gettin' a chunk of stone big 'nough for a giant, don't you ? All true, every word of it. The first quarry at Fort Dodge—I was there—gave up the job. Then they tackled a place where some men were blastin' out rocks for

a railroad near Dubuque. I ran the con-tractor down at Des Moines, and got him to give up his insides. He don't know now he helped to make the Cardiff Giant. Lull wanted to pay for the stone at the quarry, but he didn't give a picay-une at Dubuque. He jest said he'd give the gang doin' the work for the railroad—he'd give 'em a keg of beer if they'd blast out a stone so long and so wide. And that's jest what they done. And the giant born of the Bible had a keg of beer for a nursin' bottle."

"And Chicago? You went to Chicago?" asked Hillyer after he had done laughing at this quip.

"Chicago was on my map, so I went there. And I was in a hurry you can better b'lieve to leave my visitin' card at that stone-yard in North Clark street Aldinger told us 'bout. It wa'n't a hard place to find, and it's run by the same cuss it was when Aldinger was there—a Dutchman named Rheinhardt. I knew he wa'n't nobody's fool, so jest said to myself, I'd keep off his beat for a spell till I'd get the hang of the place. So what does I do but drop into a gin-mill handy by and have the bar-keep — another Dutchman—send over to the stone-yard for Rheinhardt. A gentleman wanted to see him alone on very par-ticular business, I said. The bar-keep saw a little trade in the deal and gave the game the

benefit of the doubt. Then I jest up and steps out, sayin' I'd be back before Rheinhardt come. When Rheinhardt leaves the shop, I stands on the corner, and goes in where he comes out. Fust thing I does is to ask for Aldinger as if I thought he was there yet. The five or six fellows chisellin' away for dear life stop work, and say Aldinger's left long ago—gone East they think. Then I quiz 'em to see if any of 'em worked with him—on the giant—but they all say they haven't been with Rheinhardt long; only know Aldinger 'cause the boss has spoken of him. Then I up and says I'm very sorry Aldinger's gone, for I heard he had a tool of some kind I'd like to get, a tool for puttin' a new kind o' surface on cut stone. They all shook their thick heads till I says it's a tool made with needles. Then what does one of 'em do but holler out: 'That must be the thing!' and he pulls down from a shelf the instru-ment of torture Aldinger told us Lull invented to mark the giant like as if he had pores in his skin."

"Yes, I remember the device," Hillyer remarked. "So there really was such a tool?"

"Yes, sir-ee, I had the ugly weap-on in my hands, and might have brought it back, hadn't Rheinhardt got tired waitin' for me and come back to the shop.

When he spies me with the thing in my fist, and a greenback on the bench to pay for it, I thought he'd have fits. He said he couldn't sell the tool, as it didn't belong to him, and he might have use for it anyway. When I asks him what he used it for, he jest said 'Noodin' mooch,' but he'd keep it himself. Then he jest comes back at your Uncle askin', 'Vat you vant mit him?' What d'ye s'pose I said then? Jest this: 'I *might* want to make a Cardiff Giant!'"

"Well," the artist exclaimed, "what did he say to that?"

"Never opened his peep. Mum as an oyster. Looked like one of his own grave stones—the shop was full of 'em. But you can't fool this chicken, I'd hit him below the belt and he wiggled some. Then he jest picks up Lull's pore-restorer and puts it back on the shelf. Then he says: 'Who's dot Cardiff Jiant, already?' Then I jest says this and lights out the door: 'Next time you see Aldinger ask him.'"

"What then?" was Hillyer's question.

"What then? Nuthin', only he comes after me like a bear after a honey-pot. He wants to know if I know Aldinger and a lot of other things, and I don't know nuthin'. Whoopee! I jest closes up like a clam. He don't know who I am, or what I am, and

—well, what we couldn't have dragged out of him with a yoke of oxen, he jest let's go of as pretty's you please. Only he wouldn't sell me, for love nor money, Lull's pore-restorer."

"Then," remarked Hillyer, "Aldinger's story of the carving of the stone in Chicago is true?"

"Hit it the fust time, my boy. Aldinger's other cognomen is George Washington Truth."

"How did you do it, Uncle Lew? How did you draw out Rheinhardt?"

"It wa'n't my good looks, I'll say that; must have been my winnin' ways."

And Hillyer was willing to agree that this answer covered the case.

No word of this interesting story reached the public ears.

Thus it was the Cardiff Giant escaped exposure. It was, however, under suspicion. It had been rank heresy in Salina to scout the discovery of the giant as the unearthing of a veritable wonder. Little by little an opinion hostile to the integrity of the discovery had asserted itself, and by the time its new owners were exhibiting it in New York, popular opinion in Salina was beginning to frown on it. A money transaction which had taken place between Lull and Dewell, and which

had become known through a leakage at one of the banks, had opened people's eyes. Strong voices were raised against it on the strength of newly found evidences of human handicraft which had hitherto escaped critical notice, but Dunbar's voice did not swell the rising clamour, for he was religiously keeping the pledge the artist had made with the drunken stone-cutter.

How easy it would have been for Dunbar to have shown that the giant was the product of chisels unskilled in sculpture, a block of gypsum quarried from a railroad blasting in Iowa, fashioned into the semblance of physical man under cover of a tumble-down shed in Chicago, and no more worthy either of scientific notice or popular attention than the plaster duplicate cast in partial imitation of it which Barnum was showing in New York as the original, thus piling fraud on fraud. Dunbar's investigation had borne out the stone-cutter's recital. He had learned from Rheinhardt how careful Lull's preparations had been; how clay models of a recumbent figure of a titanic man were moulded to the number of nine or ten before he was satisfied; how assiduously he worked on a form and a pose that would answer the requirements of a piece of ancient statuary should the pretence of a petrification prove

untenable; how this compromise between natural and artistic origin made the question of providing for hair on the head a serious problem, finally decided by leaving the head apparently nude; how acids and writing fluids were used to corrode the chiselled surface to give the appearance of water-wear, and how an ingenious tool was invented and employed by Lull to pick the stone with needle-points, making infinitesimal indentations which under a microscope would look like pores in fossilized skin.

"The pill was sugar-coated," was Dunbar's laconic comment on this process.

"And the dear public swallowed it like a sweet morsel," added Hillyer.

It appeared from what the stone-cutter revealed that Lull's first intention was to have the giant discovered in a cave at Salisbury, Conn., but on looking the ground over he determined a safer place of burial could be selected, and knowing fossil remains had been lately exhumed in Onondaga county, Cardiff was fixed on, the exact spot to be the farm of Dewell, who was his relative by marriage. To get the giant there it was shipped by freight to a station near Binghamton, where it was loaded upon a wagon and dragged by road eighty miles, or

thereabouts, to Cardiff, the stormy weather of November retarding transportation, but favouring concealment. This trip, consuming five days, was timed to end at night at Dewell's farm, where preparations for its arrival had already been made, so that with as little assistance as possible it was disembarked and buried nearly a year before its exhumation. As Lull had conceived the fraud, he carried out every detail of its manufacture and disposition, watching its progress from the Chicago stone-shed to the Cardiff farm, but being at pains not to seem to be concerned in it. As the story was unravelled the mystery of Lull's hurried visits to Salina the year before was pierced by light. So were Lull's veiled offers to make the eating-house keeper a showman, and that Dunbar had not mistaken their import was now apparent.

No wonder, knowing all this, Dunbar thought Hillyer was throwing away a golden opportunity in not publishing it to all the world. No wonder Aldinger, knowing that he had been led into unfolding so deep a conspiracy, should have shaken in his shoes lest his betrayal of his associates deprive him of his easy gains. It may be guessed he did not prolong his stay in Salina after he came to terms with Lull. To Dunbar and Hillyer it was

also evident that Aldinger had not put Lull on his guard against exposure. Lull manifested no sign of uneasiness when he met Dunbar the same day.

"He was as chipper as a lark," Dunbar said of this last interview, adding: "He's on thin ice and don't know it."

"And being on ice, Uncle Lew, his secret will keep," was what Hillyer remarked with a laugh.


CHAPTER XV.

A TRADE FOR A CUTTER.

IT had certainly never entered Dunbar's head that his young crony from Brooklyn had manifested anything save a friendly interest in his daughter. If any one having the right of inquiry had asked Hillyer what was in his mind when he offered to be the message-bearer between father and daughter he would have left no doubt as to the indifference of his feelings, except as they embodied his desire to be of gracious service to a good friend. It had not escaped the artist that since Grace Dunbar had come under the loving eye of his mother and sisters, her father had discontinued his periodical visits to Brooklyn, to which visits he had been accustomed to refer as the chief delight of his life. Nor was Hillyer ignorant of the motive which kept the father aloof from his daughter. It was all too plain that Dunbar was fearful his presence among Grace's friends would put her ill at ease, or in some way not clear, disturb her in the full enjoyment of her enlarged acquaintanceship. Dunbar had too often

contrasted his own and his daughter's manner of life, to hide the tenour of his thoughts, even had he been intending to be thus secretive with Hillyer, which was obviously not the case. When, therefore, Dunbar found he was following the course of his daughter more clearly through Hillyer's letters, rather than through those she wrote, no trace of parental solicitude for her heart-wholeness ever dulled his keen pleasure in all the little details. It appeared Grace was frequently of the companies the gayeties of which diverted the social side of Brooklyn. Under certain restrictions prescribed by the convent authorities she had been widening her knowledge of the world and what the world does, and though she had made no plunge into the proverbial vortex where fashion reigns, she had come within range of a new life, and what is more proved her ability to hold her own there. It was of Grace's happiness in these surroundings, of her sweet simplicity as a figure in them, and his mother's pride in being permitted to have for a charge a girl altogether so charming, that Hillyer wrote in terms that would have looked serious to another than the eating-house keeper.

"Our little convent maid" (it was thus Hillyer spoke of Grace) "would be the inseparable com-



panion of my sisters if the convent would let her out of prison every day of the week. I would not dare tell you, Uncle Lew, how pretty Miss Grace is. You must come down and see how she improves. You have no right to be her father, because you neglect her shamefully, and because her father's ugliness is reversed in her good looks! My mother wants me to say to you that Miss Grace is just as simple and sweet in manner as she is simple and sweet in face—as a young girl ought to be. Convent training is a great thing. I am no musician myself, but people who know, say she sings beautifully and plays the piano with no little skill. I told her the other day my plan for some day writing a book about you—you remember you said if I did I would be arrested for 'shoving the queer' and would have to spend the rest of my life 'playing checkers with my nose at Sing Sing.' Your daughter doesn't think so. She says she will help me, and though I hate to say it, I fear I am in a tight box, for Miss Grace thinks you are such a great man (I tell her she doesn't know you) that before I get through (if she helps) I shall be writing a biography of another Abe Lincoln."

It had been arranged that Grace should spend the Christmas holidays with the Hillyers, and Dunbar

had half-promised, after much persuasion, to run down for a day's stay, the especial provision being agreed to, that he should "take care of himself," at the Astor House.

With the departure of the Cardiff Giant the town of Salina had settled back to its accustomed ways and Dunbar had settled back with it. At the Salina House there were still occasional references to the giant, or to speak accurately to the giants, for traffic in the fraud had proved so alluring that imitations of the "only genuine" article in that line had appeared in nearly every museum and travelling circus in the land. Actual knowledge of the spurious character of the giant unearthed at Cardiff was not common, it is true, except that it was known to have come in a box to the Dewell farm by four-horse team from a railroad station near Binghamton. Then the scientists, smarting under the imposition put on them, turned upon it with wolfish ferocity and produced a thousand evidences of its palpable worthlessness. Salina's pride began to wince under the ill-fame it had inherited with the giant.'

"Take it easy," was Dunbar's admonition in the face of this sentiment. "We've lived through the cholera plague which was worse. We'll stand this storm—it won't be long—and anchor by and by."

So it happened. The Cardiff Giant faded out of the vista of Salina's activities. The town, or such part of it as furnished the impulse by force of which it throbbed, took more interest in Dunbar's sorrel mare, which that winter began kicking up the snow in the face of all comers. The knowing ones among the horsemen were wondering if Crazy Jane would make a trotter. To tell the truth Dunbar, who was not often beguiled by strange fancies regarding horses, was puzzled to answer the many inquiries which followed the public trials of the nervous little mare. Salina had produced a few horses which in their day had poked their noses under the wire in fast time, but Dunbar was saying this winter that he had something "by way of a race horse" which was going to "make Dexter let out tucks."

Dunbar was not telling by what stroke of good fortune he had placed Crazy Jane in his stable. The mare appeared one day, when the town was racing its best mettle on the snow track, drawing a resplendent cutter, the goose-neck of which was a blaze of gilt, held at either side by elaborately carved eagles' heads. Its like as a gentleman's vehicle had never slipped through Salina's streets. The mare had not performed handsomely that

day, but she showed a gait once or twice that rivetted attention on her, especially as Dunbar was holding the reins. He was under his own vine and fig tree at the eating-house that night, and a number of curious friends, and some others, dropped in to ask what he had. If a man was behind a horse in Salina, no interpreter need go into dictional details about the phrase "What you got?" It always meant the same thing.

It was plain Dunbar was feigning when, this question being put to him, he immediately began talking about his new cutter.

"It *is* some pumpkins, ain't it?" he said dryly.

"She looks as if she could go?" Lawyer Bartlett remarked, and he knew, for he had smart horses of his own.

"Go?" answered Dunbar. "Go? Runners greased with oil from the slippery elm tree growin' on the banks of Petroleum creek."

"Where did you get her, Lew?" was the next interrogatory.

"Traded."

"Any pedigree, Lew—who's get is she?" This question to force Dunbar to talk about the horse, not the cutter.

"No ped-i-gree, but a great guar-an-tee. War-

ranted to last one hundred years, if not used for a stone-boat. Hand-made and hand-painted, as light as a lady's fan and as strong as an iron-bound trunk."

"I'm talking about the nag, Lew, not the cutter, and I'm not saying the cutter's not a beauty," Bartlett said.

"O, the mare?" drawled Dunbar, "O, she's nuthin' much. Jest a dung-hill from over Baldwinville way. Got her to boot in the trade for the cutter. Traded for the cutter."

"Come now, Lew, what you got?"

"Yes," chimed in the crowd, "what you got?"

"Not much for looks, is she?" was Dunbar's reply. He knew it was a challenge to tell all that had been thrown down. "But I ain't countin' on that. The mare don't stand me in much in the deal for the cutter."

"Maybe she's been on the track, eh, Lew?" suggested Lawyer Bartlett, again falling into his natural habit of cross-examination.

"Maybe," rejoined Dunbar. "You and me've seen as skinny ones tryin' to earn their keep, haven't we?"

"What you got, Lew? Honest Injun, now."

"Put up your cork-screws, gents," Dunbar made

reply. "I might's well unbosom myself now's any time; if I don't I know you won't let me live in town."

With the sigh that always accompanies an appeased curiosity the company drew closer.

"Well, the mare come to me in a dream," he began.

"In a dream, eh?" cried Conductor Ashley. "You always sleep with one eye open, Lew."

"She come to me in a dream—she's a sort of night-mare, d'ye see? Now as to her get," Dunbar went on, turning to Lawyer Bartlett, "I judge she's part Ken-tucky bred and part saw-horse—kinder git-up-and-git. Anyways that's what I think. Nervous ain't no name for her, 'cause why, the fellow who traded cutters with me wouldn't keep her no-how. Lawyer Bartlett's not off the track when he says she looks as if she'd been tried a mite in front of a sulky. She's done some trottin', they tell me, but not much to speak on. Hard to handle, d'ye see? Iron won't hold her down. But you know horses are like men-folks—have their whims and their wrinkles. A nag that's good for you, won't do for me. I've an idea I can make Crazy Jane mind, 'cause why, I'm not goin' to get on her nerve. She can jig along some, if you took notice to-day,

and pre-haps she'll make a good family horse if she don't turn out a fast one. Anyways I took her to boot for the cutter—and a small con-sideration in coin—and while I'm seein' what she's made of, I can't be doin' no harm. And you'll please make a note of it, nobody in this here potato patch is bobbin' round in a finer cutter than your Uncle Lew's."

"Going to enter the mare in the races next summer, Lew?" Lawyer Bartlett inquired.

"No one can tell what the morrer will bring forth," was the reply.

"You've been about everything in your day, Uncle Lew," put in the conductor. "But I never heard you say you drove a race-horse?"

"Once, in Cairo, Illinois, but it ain't the instrument in the brass band I'm cut out for, and if Crazy Jane shows speed, I guess I'll have to do the elegant as the owner and let the drivin' pass to some one who knows better how to do it."

"That's a rich man's pastime," said Bartlett. "Only men with big piles of money can keep trotting horses."

"Well, as to that," quickly responded Dunbar, "as to that, don't let it escape your ob-ser-va-tion that riches and havin' money's two different things.

Now, take me and Sam Lorin', and he pays the biggest income tax in town. He's got more money'n I have, but I'm richer than he is. Whoopee! It's what you get out of life, not what it gets out of you. Horses were made to drive, weren't they? Well, who says I wa'n't made to drive 'em? On God's green earth there's nuthin' livin' and breathin' that beats a horse when it has suthin' in it that you're tryin' to get out. You know what I mean, and so does the horse if it's wuth its fodder. You want to go jest a leetle faster and the horse wants to show you he's game—a game horse does. It's the sportin' blood in his veins, and man or horse without it's no better'n a handful of Confederate money."

There was sporting blood enough in Salina to make this declaration of principles generally acceptable. Its impulses kept the owner of Crazy Jane on the keen edge of expectancy during the whole winter. It was obvious the cutter trade, especially what Dunbar had "to boot" in that transaction, was monopolising his attention, to the disadvantage, too, of the eating-house, which he was roundly berated for neglecting by the faithful Mrs. Dobson, who was second in command of the establishment, as she had been for many years.

"O, you run the she-bang," Dunbar told her, "and

I won't say a word. Jest re-member one thing—in this business don't make both ends meet, that's all. Don't *let* both ends meet. When a basket full of eggs or a firkin of butter comes in at the front door, run 'round to the back door and see it don't get out. I know you and you know me. Let the eatin'-house worry along. We won't starve, not by a long sight."

It was because Crazy Jane was in the veterinary's care for a few days at Christmas time that Dunbar broke the half promise he had made to be in Brooklyn at that season, and though Grace was sorely disappointed, Hillyer discreetly refrained from expressing an opinion as to the real reason. He sharply rebuked Dunbar for his bad conduct, and ventured very close to a statement of the truth when he wrote that he believed Dunbar was inventing a flimsy excuse to avoid making the trip. This was as near as the artist dared get to calling Dunbar's diffidence foolish pride.

"If I did not know you as well as I do, Uncle Lew," Hillyer wrote, "I am a sinner if I would not believe you thought more of that horse of yours than you do of your daughter. Fortunately for her she has friends here in Brooklyn who do think something of her, and even though disappointed, as we all are, that you have flunked, Miss Grace is hav-

ing a good time. She told us, of course, how handsomely you remembered her for Christmas, but if she has written you all the nice things she said about her father, she has made a mistake, because she may make you think you can buy a daughter's forgiveness. As she will not see this letter, I do not mind saying also that you are a very decent kind of a father. All that Miss Grace has done for us here—yours truly included—was lovely, and nothing was sweeter than her remembrances to the sisters at the convent. If I was the father of such a daughter, Uncle Lew, I would go round the world to see her. We only asked you to come to Brooklyn."

Dunbar might have taken this chastisement with poor grace had he not been as indulgent of Hillyer as Hillyer was of him. The two men understood each other, though it must be admitted Dunbar was not to be twitted, never so cautiously, when his daughter was concerned, without imperilling his even temper.

In this letter Hillyer told him so much that warmed his heart, he had no chance to contemplate even the lightest touch of his friend's raillery. The visit of Grace to the Hillyers had been occupied by a season of merriment such as a girl of eighteen of

greater experience would have thought supremely blissful. Besides there had been a maturing of plans for the coming summer's expedition to Europe, the prospect of which was like a dream of never-to-be-realised happiness! In this strain Grace wrote to her father of the plans in detail. Mr. Hillyer, it appeared, was to join the party during their sojourn, a fact not mentioned by the artist in his letters to Dunbar. Though Grace expressed unrestrained delight at this, it escaped the father's notice, possibly as a commonplace. Had his powers of penetration been as restlessly searching as they were wont to be—or were when others than Grace came within range—he might have taken note that Mr. Hillyer's kindnesses and attentions were frequently mentioned, and that the artist never seemed far away when Grace was in the fullest enjoyment of herself. Another thing Dunbar missed the significance of—the gradual omission from Hillyer's letters of the praises he formerly sang of Grace. There was a deal more of what would have been detected by a watchful mother, for instance, as conventional restraint, in the artist's references to the girl. A watchful mother would surely have had her opinions in the premises, and governed herself accordingly. Dunbar's knowledge of human nature fell incon-

tinently short of this emergency. Not so Mrs. Hillyer's.

"Robert's choice will be mine," was what she said when this subject was first broached by her daughters, with such show of glee as sisters have made from time immemorial under like circumstances. It appears there was a watchful mother in Brooklyn.

CHAPTER XVI.

PARTED FRIENDS.

THE ponderous hulk of an ocean-going steamship scraped against the side of her berth. All the noises common to human and mechanical vocalism, the inseparable accompaniment of a ship setting sail, were making confusion worse confounded. A stream of people ascending a gang-plank were intent on finding their own places and a stream of others more numerous still, were intent on finding places for the final consignment of freight with which the great vessel's hold was being filled. Of the former, but through the latter passed, with no small amount of pains, the touring party from the Hillyers' home. They had penetrated, unharmed by backing trucks, hurrying stevedores, excited fellow-passengers and swaying pulley-blocks, to the foot of the gang-plank, led by Robert Hillyer and guarded at their rear by Lewis Dunbar. The prices at which the flowers offered for sale on the pier were being sold proclaimed more eloquently than anything else in sight in that

tangle of moving commerce that it was a day in May. No tree in tender leaf, no stretch of green-sward down there where Nature stands for naught, marked the season's advent. It was rather as if the hardness, the cruelty, the bitterness of Winter rested on and dominated the scene. Tearful partings were drowned by the merciless din that swept over it. There was no heed as to whether the ship should make her port so long as she took on her load. Apprehensions, crying aloud in hundreds of breasts, were crushed by the seemingly tireless haste to turn an argosy of souls into a commercial profit. Sentiments and feelings and heart-throbs struggled in vain amidst a chaos of clanking chains, creaking ropes, rolling bales, rumbling boxes, the shrill cries of men giving orders, the hissing of steam and the tumult of many voices saying everything but farewells. To get the ship away, staggering under her cargo of life and of freight, animated everybody, while no thought was spared, it appeared, for the pain it cost this one to go, that one to stay, and all to part.

Dunbar and Hillyer had left their charges buried in flowers in their staterooms—the last warning having been given to visitors to get ashore—and were awaiting the casting loose of the cables at a

point of vantage on the pier. Dunbar had come dangerously near buying out a flower stand to testify to Mrs. Hillyer and her daughters the gratitude he felt they had earned on this occasion. Hillyer's remembrances were already in the state-rooms when these were opened to their occupants by the cabin steward. Dunbar had fairly lugged his on the ship.

"You see, Pro-fessor, I never took a hand in a game like this," Dunbar said to Hillyer. "On the Mississippi when a boat sails flowers ain't on the bill-of-fare. If you'd told me, I'd have made her careen with the blossoms of May. I guess the old man's got lots to learn."

"You've done your duty nobly, Uncle Lew," Hillyer rejoined, "and when it comes to learning, most of us could be taught generous thoughtfulness by you."

The bounteous offerings Dunbar had brought to the ladies had provoked profusest thanks, and Grace, proud to the last degree of her father's politeness, had showered him with kisses. As he recalled the incident, he could not remember when she had ever unbent so far. The timidity, almost fear, of her early girlhood was absent from the parting on shipboard. Dunbar had broken through

the barrier of his own making, and the evening before had actually gone to the Hillyers' to spend the only available time with Grace, rather to the discomfort of the artist, who wondered if he had not stood in his own light in insisting on Dunbar's visit the night before her departure. Grace's store of filial love, too, was apparently inexhaustible, for she had eyes for no one but her father from the moment he met them on the pier to the last glimpse it was possible to have of him as the ship steamed seaward. Hillyer found his sole satisfaction in keeping at Dunbar's elbow and convincing himself that Grace's wild gesticulations were fond enough to be shared and shared alike.

Carried away by the excitement of the scene Hillyer, slapping his friend on the back, had said :

"By Jove, Uncle Lew, but she's a beautiful girl. I shall miss her awfully—miss her and mother and the girls. You old rascal, you don't know what a treasure you have in that daughter of yours."

"She's as good as they make 'em, I guess, as good as they make 'em. I only hope, my boy, she won't be any trouble to your mother."

Hillyer was full of reassurances on this score, and as they walked along, was bold enough to inquire what, if any, were Dunbar's plans touching Grace

When, in the Autumn, she returned from Europe. Dunbar confessed he was concerned on this account, being compelled for the first time since he placed her at the convent, to assume a responsibility of truly parental proportions. He thought of the gilded cross and what a blessing it had been to him.

It is feared that Hillyer, finding his friend in a serious quandary on account of the unanswered question, goaded him a bit. Dunbar said he supposed he might make provision for her so she could live in New York and pursue her musical studies, a suggestion that did not strike him as absurd until Hillyer pointed out how impossible it was. Salina, for her, Dunbar interposed, was out of the question.

"Then," put in Hillyer, "you must move away from there, or else—or else—why Miss Grace must marry."

The artist waited for the effect of this speech. It was answered by silence.

"Girls sometimes marry, you know, Uncle Lew, and Miss Grace is not likely to escape the general fate."

"Wish I could find a man good enough for her, but that's a game in which you can't cut for deal," was Dunbar's reply.

It was on the end of Hillyer's tongue to say he

could save his old friend the trouble of looking further, but instead, he took counsel of his better discretion, he thought, and remarked as nonchalantly as possible :

“Then you have thought, Uncle Lew, that Miss Grace and you will have to separate in the—in the—in the, well, the natural course of events?”

“Thought of it, my boy, thought of it?” said Dunbar, as he caught Hillyer by the arm and stopped dead on the sidewalk, “why that’s *all* I think about. But it ain’t fear of losin’ her—if it’s on the square—which bothers me. It ain’t that, no sir-ee. It’s ’cause there ain’t no sure things in this marriage game. I never expect to have the gal back. Her and me don’t trot in the same class. No one need tell me that. No, Pro-fessor”—as Hillyer made some sign of disputing this oft-asserted difference in the relation of father and daughter—“no, it won’t go down. I’m a good father, that’s what you’re goin’ to say, and I won’t put up a red cent you ain’t right—I want to be, and the gal *thinks* I am. She thinks I’m a yard wide and all wool. That’s jest the way I’d have it, my boy, jest the way I’d have it. She thinks I’m as great as the President of the United States, and I know she’s the kind of a gal whose father ought to

be President. The trouble is, my boy, she got the wrong start. Her cradle ought to have been rocked in the White House. Now what I'm wantin' for her's a man who thinks she's as good as I do, and if he ain't got a sou to bless himself with, why if he's on the square, I'll go my pile on him—I'll go my pile on him."

"You're the best judge of men I ever met, Uncle Lew, and I'll trust you to find the right man," said Hillyer as they renewed their walk.

"The gal's got to do the findin', Pro-fessor, not me. And it ain't every one can pick winners. That's what troubles the old man. Any one she says suits *her*, suits *me*, for I'm not the kind of father to use a curb bit on a high-stepper. But it's such a long chance! They're so apt to stack the cards on a beginner."

"I only wish I could assure you, Uncle Lew, that Miss Grace will make no mistake," a remark which Hillyer was truly sorry he had made the moment it was uttered. To palliate the offence he was in haste to add :

"I rather think, Uncle Lew, Miss Grace has your gift of selection, and will choose wisely when the time comes. You know there's no hurry—no great hurry. We'll keep our eyes on her, and as father

and friend—if you don't mind me taking a hand—try to keep her headed in the right direction."

Dunbar again blocked the way, and placing his hands on the artist's shoulder in an unconscious attitude of affection, said:

"I was thinkin' of askin' you, Pro-fessor, to be that much of a friend to your Uncle Lew. There's good men and bad men in your world jest as there's in mine. I know my kind better'n I do yours. Anyways I'm afraid to trust myself in this shuffle of the deck. My eye ain't as quick as it used to be. Then there're lots of new tricks in the game I ain't learnt. If you'll say you won't let things go wrong, I'll b'lieve you, Pro-fessor, and I'll feel a lot happier about it."

"I'll do my very best," was Hillyer's response, and it was more in the way he said it than what he said which reassured his friend.

"Then we needn't worry," Dunbar said confidently, as if the future of his daughter was now safe.

"No one's more anxious to have her do well than I am, Uncle Lew. Suppose we say, now and here, that I will make it a *personal* matter. It's a bigger responsibility than I have ever shouldered, but we're too good friends to make me stop at an effort."

Dunbar nodded a cordial assent to this proof of their relationship. Hillyer went on :

" Now, old friend, you mustn't expect an angel to pick out your daughter, but you do want a decent sort of chap—"

" I would like a gentleman, no more nor less."

" Well, let's say a fellow no better, no worse than I am."

Whatever of hidden meaning there was in this suggestion, it passed Dunbar by, and he gave sign of unmistakable approval. Hillyer was already marvelling at his own temerity. Then again he felt it was all very grotesque, this assumption of his, that he was to have any control over the destiny of Grace Dunbar, or that under the conditions imposed, he would wish to have such a stewardship. So he closed the tender and sentimental discussion by saying :

" Uncle Lew, you can depend on me to help you to that extent."

They shook hands and went on. In the next breath the conversation had shifted to the merits of Crazy Jane, and to their exploitation for Hillyer's private ear, Dunbar gave instant tongue to his quaint eloquence.

" I'm not saying a word nowadays about the

mare up in Salina," he said, "but she's suthin' to bank on. I never saw a horse I couldn't handle, and if I wasn't quite a wizard, I'd have lost this particular prize-package. She's strung up as tight's a fiddle, and needs as much pettin' as a kitten, but she's a whirlwind on four legs if you treat her right. She won't take the gad no more'n a Philadelphia Quaker'll take Jamaica rum. But gosh all fish-hooks! she'll trot like a house afire—sometimes—not always, and when she gets on the track, she'll have to be watched to see she don't fool you. I've a side notion she can jig along to make me an honest dollar this summer, and come wind, come zephyrs, I'll have a whack at the money-bags. At her best she scares me stiff, and give me the worst of her, she's a gay deceiver. It's about time for the fun to open, I know her to the bone, and as I'm the only sar-dine who does, I don't fret much over the spec-u-lation."

"Not an old reliable?" interjected Hillyer.

"But a race-horse jest the same," said Dunbar. "And a good wedge to open bank safes with. Sorry you ain't goin' to be here, my boy, for there's nimble sixpences to be picked up in followin' her."

"O, I'll be back from Europe, I hope, before the summer's over, and unless you go broke, Uncle

Lew, will perhaps have a sight of the little wonder. But I guess I'll save money by being away. Crazy Jane might tempt a weak man to wager his little all. I was not born lucky."

"It ain't the way you're born that counts, my boy. You've hearn tell it is better to be born lucky than rich. Don't b'lieve it. I've tried both, and know. It all de-pends on whether you call the turn. Get that down fine, my boy, and you can forget you ever were born. He's a cheap sort who wants to put his birth up for col-lateral. You're no such son of a sea-cook."

"No, Uncle Lew, I'm not, that's sure. I am not a Son of Malta either, and you are, and I want you to tell me how you came to be one. You promised me the story when I was in Salina, but I never heard it. Let's go in and have a bite while you spin the yarn."

"I've a gentle hankerin' for a toothful," was Dunbar's reply, and the two men turned into a fashionable restaurant in Broadway. Dunbar seemed to be in the very spirit of the place in a jiffy. All about him were men of easy life, some of them, as the artist pointed out, among the most conspicuous of the metropolis' citizens. There was a well-bred gracefulness, even in the way they

loured in their seats, that might have made Dunbar's presence a contrast had he not fallen so readily into their manners. Hillyer could not help remarking to himself at what a disadvantage his old friend was always seen when he thought he must be something else besides his plain self. He had been all conscious awkwardness the night before. A group of women had made this man of the world as uncomfortable as a fish out of water. Now, the very posture of his legs under the table gave him title to position in such a company as he was in.

Hillyer, by way of leading up to reminiscence, said while their order was being filled :

"I've noticed two things about you, Uncle Lew—if you don't mind my saying it—that struck me as a bit odd in a man of your varied and extraordinary experience—you are very moderate in your potations—in your drinking; and I've never heard you swear enough to shock anybody."

"Swearin', eh? What's the use of talkin' to heaven in the vernacular of hell? Lost motion, my boy, lost motion. There's a good many kinds of fool in this world, but the fellow who wastes breath swearin' 's all kinds. And when it comes to wettin' your whistle, don't you know a drunken palate has no taste? Next to a sober second

thought is a third sober drink. It's on me this time, and while the gentlemanly chemist is pre-parin' the con-coction I will tell you how I came to be a Son of Malta. You wanted to know."

"I was about to ask the favour," said Hillyer. "In the first place tell me, as I never knew, what the Sons of Malta were, why they were organized and what principles they espoused."

"Guess again," was Dunbar's reply. "Its secrets were buried and never dug up again. There was a rush to jine and I jined—only members of the fust families got the chance. No Irish need apply, as it were. Every town in the country had a lodge, and it took in-flu-ence to see you through. One night at the Salina House I got the counter-sign. They were goin' to send me through the blow-hole. My friends in the lodge wanted me, and they made me think it was better'n fallin' into money. Fust-off I was taken on a carriage ride, and after they'd put blinders on me, I was es-corted up a long flight of stairs to the lodge room. I heard heavenly voices, but saw no one. It turned out there were others who were goin' to be born again into the Sons of Malta. All of us had to give our ped-i-gree, and the recordin' angels took 'em down in a big book. I sniffed around to see if

I couldn't smell brimstone, but I couldn't smell a thing. Soft entrancin' music came from inner chambers. The mystic songs of the order were be-in' chanted by far-away voices.

"We were in the hands of the Grand Conductor, they told us, and were started on our way rejoicin'. To a dead march we were walked like sheep to the slaughter to the presence of the Great Tycoon. Great Cæsar's ghost, but it was a dreadful moment! Then I heard my own name called among the rest, all citizens of great re-nown in the burg. One by one we were asked if we'd come of our own free will, and if we'd lay down life, kindred and fortune to uphold the sacred cause of the order. Every Son of Malta on the anxious seat yelled amen. Then we were told we were pledged to do all and a little besides for the re-demption of Cuba, the bleedin' isle, from the bloody grasp of the tyrant Spaniard.

"'I'm with you body and breeches,' was my answer to the dread summons to arms.

"'Let it be re-corded!' I heard a voice like a Mississippi horn shout, and 'Let it be re-corded!' sounded down the corridors of time like a funeral dirge.

"My bosom was swellin' with pride, when some

Digger Injun on a back seat wanted to know if I was of tested courage and worthy of e-lection to the noble order. A friend—I knew his voice—spoke up for me, and said no man was braver; that if called on I'd lead the fight in Cuba. I didn't know whether I would or not, but jest then I didn't dare to take chances, so kept still.

“Jest at this stage of the game there was a loud knockin' on the door, and the Tycoon asked who was at the portals.

“‘Who dares break in on our solemmity?’ he says.

“‘Most noble sir,’ says another voice which sounded like a dyin' moan, ‘the Governor of the State and other noble Sons of Malta would crave admission.’

“‘The Governor is welcome,’ I heard the Tycoon say. ‘Name the others.’

“And I heard names that were great, the very greatest. There was a four flush of dominies, a bishop and three of his kind.

“‘Admit 'em all in the name of the Tycoon,’ I heard a voice say, and then chains rattled and locks clicked like a jail de-livery. I felt the blood rush-in' to my head. I shook in my shoes. I listened and heard the pro-cession of distinguished men

enter the throne room. I knew the Tycoon and the other Sons of Malta were standin' up to receive the guests. Small fry like me felt pretty skinny, I can tell you. Darn my buttons, I thought the ceremony'd never end. But they got to a wind-up by and bye.

"Then the Tycoon took up my case, and put me through a course of sprouts that made my hair curl. He raked me from top to bottom, and dragged out of me all the innermost secrets of my long career. I wondered a thousand times what the Governor would say. There was some of my history that wa'n't meant for the camp meetin', but I let them have it for the benefit of the cause, and trusted to luck.

" 'The noble brother's been found a fit candidate for election,' the Tycoon said, and you can better believe I was glad to hear the news.

" 'Let it be recorded !' shouted the Tycoon and down the corridors again echoed the dismal sounds. It made a fellow's blood run cold. The others—my companions in crime—were put through the same rigamarole, and found all O. K. Then we all went through the gulf. This was to show we weren't quitters, and the next day, the pace had been so hot, I couldn't tell whether I'd been afoot or

a-horseback. They shook us up as if we'd been in a railroad col-lision, and kept the thing goin' so fast, I didn't have time to catch my breath and hand in my re-signation.

"We were all re-ported good and true Sons of Malta, and once more for the cigars, the cry went up and down 'Let it be re-corded!'

"Then I found out there was to be an e-lection that night—some Son of Malta had left for green fields and pastures new, and there was a vacancy in the office of the Grand L. E. J. A. I'd gone through the fiery ordeal so well, a fool friend of mine put me up for the office against three or four others who'd seen service as Sons of Malta. Of course, having just been ini-ti-ated, there was a big row at once. I couldn't see what was goin' on, as they had the blinders on still, but there was fur flyin', I can tell you. One man accused me of being a pro-fessional burglar, and unfit for any dignity in the order, 'though he ad-mitted I *might* make a good target in Cuba. You can tell how a decent man felt to be hauled over the coals in this way with the Governor of the State sittin' there a-listenin'. And I couldn't open my mouth. They *made* me hold my hush. Well, they got to votin', and there was ex-citement enough for a sewin'

circle, when the Tycoon announced I'd received a majority of the votes and was elected in due and ancient form to the high and honourable office of Grand L. E. J. A.

"'It's a great honour, Mr. Dunbar,' says the Tycoon, 'one which any Son of Malta of years of service would appreciate, to be chosen Grand L. E. J. A. But you have been chosen Grand L. E. J. A. on the very night of your induction into the order,' he says. 'This is an unparalleled honour,' he says. 'I congratulate you,' he says, 'on your election as Grand L. E. J. A., which being interpreted means Grand Long Eared Jack Ass.'"

"It was all a joke, I see," said Hillyer.

"Pre-haps so! My wine bill was \$45," was what Dunbar said.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LITTLE BOB-TAIL.

LEWIS DUNBAR'S name was coming into widespread notoriety on the turf. Crazy Jane was racing in the principal meetings, and was performing so much at odds with the traditions of the track that the papers were saying owner and mare might be named under the same prefix. At the same time the eccentric little bob-tail was a diverting feature of every race in which she was an entry, as she was trotting quarters at a clip that equalled the best, with the result that the horsemen were beginning to whisper that "that man Dunbar from Salina has a ringer up his sleeve." Dunbar usually managed to get away with either second or third money in each event, "a division of the spoils," as he put it, which seemed eminently satisfactory to him.

In the race-track crowds such a man as Dunbar could not fail to be a figure. Where he stood there was to be found a group of attent listeners, for he was always bubbling over with good humour; and it therefore came about naturally that the pool-

seller he patronised invariably had the largest audience. It soon became known that Dunbar placed bets on no horse but his own, and never save on the proposition that she would finish second or third. Some days he took no part at all in the betting, a fact for which old campaigners on the turf could not account, especially as on these off days Dunbar's interest in the way Crazy Jane acted seemingly increased tenfold. He would be at the stable when she came out and when she went in to pat her on the flanks, and say an encouraging word to Jasper Jackson, her driver, who seemed to have conceived for the strange beast an affection as great as Dunbar's.

The little mare most assuredly had been won over by her owner. Judged by all the accepted standards of form and action Crazy Jane was undoubtedly a caricature of a race-horse. Everybody laughed at her and Dunbar laughed with the rest. Nobody could help it, to see such an ungainly creature, her over-large head twisted to one side so as to make her look down the track out of her one good eye, her legs gyrating at a score of angles and her hoofs pounding like trip-hammers, matched in a trial of speed against the choice and pick of the blue bloods.

Dunbar would watch his horse heat after heat from a place inside the fence on the quarter-stretch, half way between the distance and the judges' stands, and it seemed as if the mare knew just where his beaver hat would appear at the fence, for there her watch eye would apparently light.

"Jig along, Jane," Dunbar would say in a coaxing sort of tone that made the mare steady like a clock.

Still the talent of the track wondered why entrance money should be wasted on a horse that never showed signs of being able to head the pack. Then Dunbar would give the ostensible reason.

"You see," he said, "I'm a resid-u-ary legatee horseman. Crazy Jane's part of an estate which I'm administerin' for a dead friend."

This was the new fiction he had invented. The dream theory with which he had regaled the curious in Salina had been abandoned.

"You can't go back on a dead friend," he continued. "My friend, who didn't know any more 'bout horses'n an angel in heaven knows about fried eggs, thought he'd a good one in Crazy Jane, but he went and kicked the bucket before he had a chance to race the mare. So in his will, makin' me the cus-todian of all his worldly goods, Crazy Jane

was turned over to me, with the re-quest of a dyin' man to prove he hadn't made no mistake. It was a sacred trust, you see, and that's how I'm on the race-track instead of attendin' to my le-gitimate business as the or-ganist of the village church. You can see how it goes agin my grain, but I'm makin' as good a bluff's a man of my re-ligious trainin' can. As for the leetle mare, I don't mind sayin' she kinder takes my eye, and I may become a sport before I know it. I know she can't win, but she can jig along some, and just to keep faith with my dead friend I put up a leetle money on her now and then. If he was on earth he'd bet his bottom dollar, for he was game through and through. I'm doin' by him as I'd be done by. Hear me!"

Around the tables of his eating-house or the desk at the Salina House this whimsical explanation of Dunbar's latest exploit would have been taken at its true worth. There may have been those in stranger company who recognised this picture of a friend's devotion as a fancy sketch.

"Why did I enter Crazy Jane? in a fast class?" Dunbar had said, repeating an obvious question. "Be-cause I wanted to be through with my duty to my dead friend as soon's possible. You understand if he'd lived he'd have started the mare in the forties

'stead of the eighteen class, where I put her. He'd have carried her through five or six seasons, tryin' out the fat in her. He thought, poor soul, she could step off in 2:18 or better, and would have stuck to it till she did, or he went up Salt River. Now, I'm givin' the nag a whirl in fast company for a go-in, and as she can't win, why I can think at the end of the season, jest as my dead friend did, that Crazy Jane's good for 2:18. If she ain't timed I can b'lieve anything I like. At the end of this season I'll re-tire the mare from the track and call her the queen of the turf. If she can't make better'n 2:40 I won't know it, and what a man don't know won't hurt him. It costs like sin, this racin' a horse for a ghost, but I'm not the man to go back on a dead friend."

Dunbar often wished Hillyer had not taken himself off to Europe in such a hurry after that May day in New York. Hillyer certainly had been in extreme haste, for his departure to join the touring party had not been delayed more than a month. The artist had not advised Dunbar of his sailing until he was on the point of taking ship, giving him time only to make Hillyer the bearer of a short message to Grace. Hillyer had written :

"I feel the great responsibility you placed on me

in New York, and want to be near enough to its object to be sure of myself. I am still looking out for the right man."

Dunbar did not attempt to keep up a correspondence with the travellers, but at Hillyer's request, mailed in care of a London bank copies of the newspapers describing the races in which Crazy Jane appeared. To Grace he wrote a few lines now and then to the same address. Hillyer, therefore, under a pretence of watching the progress of the bob-tail mare, responded at length, as did also Grace, whose summer was proving to be the happiest in her life.

Hillyer's letters were infrequent, of course, but they were full of expressions of interest in the success of the mare. It was this evidence of sympathy which made Dunbar wish his young friend at hand. In the one letter he sent the artist he put the matter as forcibly as he could. Hillyer was told he was fooling his time away in foreign parts when more was to be seen on the race-tracks of his native land.

"I thought I knew a thing or two," Dunbar said months after in describing his experience as the owner of a race-horse, "but until I got into bed with the jockeys I hadn't cut my eye teeth. They

are the gents who stay up nights workin' the secret springs on you. When the mare and me begun swingin' round the circle, they thought Crazy Jane was a milch cow, and wouldn't touch me with a ten-foot pole. The hull crew was for givin' me the worst end of the game, and they used to get together in every town and di-vide up the money for the next day and always left that leetle mare of mine out of the cal-culation. It was fixed for this fellow to win fust money, another to win second and another to win third. Then you ought to see the tricksies drive accordin' to pro-gramme. They wanted Crazy Jane in a pocket, and if that intelligent contra-band of mine, Jasper Jackson, Esquire, hadn't taken a few lessons from your Uncle Lew, they'd have had him where his hair was short. You see the mare was goin' like a streak of greased lightnin' all the while, but she wasn't gettin' a mark, as she was not finishin' fust. Jasper was sendin' her jest fast enough to pull down a piece of the purse every time. Pretty soon they com-menced to see the mare was no quitter and had a lengthy stride when put to it, and when they timed her at the quarters, she jest up and put their eyes out. Then they wanted to do business with your Uncle Lew; wanted to work gum games with an honest man.

I was to have a share in the plunder if I'd drive the mare accordin' to a map they'd make the night afore for every race. What did I say to that? Why I said 'Not for Joseph,' that's what I said, and I kept fetchin' up right along.

"Then there was another shuffle of the cards, and I had another look at the wickedness of my fellow-men. They got after Jasper and the mare. They filled the nigger up with firewater one night, at Albany, and the next day the mare went lame on the track. She got the flag the first heat and went to the stable. I had to drive her myself next day as my imp of darkness was seein' snakes. But the black rascal was up to the larks of the pro-fession, and, as drunk as he was, found the whyfore and wherefore of the lameness—a wire tied under the fetlock of her nigh hind foot. The clumsy sharks had tied it too tight, and lamed the mare fust off. They meant her to feel it after the race got goin' but got slipped up. They dosed her feed more times than I can re-member, but that Nubian body-guard of mine, Jasper Jackson, had a way of tellin', and spiled the trick. But I tell you it was hard sleddin', and if there's a brace game on God's foot-stool, it's the race-track. It's playin' with marked cards from start to finish. But Crazy Jane went

through the valley of the shadow of death, and your Uncle Lew brought up the rear with a she-kel or two rolled up in his handkerchief."

It was of these things that Dunbar would have Hillyer know. The two men took a common delight in developing phases of human nature. Here was one Dunbar felt sure Hillyer would study with infinite zest. Together, he felt, they would have enjoyed the experience immensely. Dunbar was admittedly near the stage where he placed considerable dependence on the sympathy of his young friend. It was a new emotion, this desire to share all his confidences with another, and he fairly revelled in it; new in the sense that until he had met Hillyer he had never felt drawn to any man beyond the bounds of good friendship. Hillyer was not a man out of the ordinary. His own definition of what Grace's husband might be—"no better, no worse than I am"—was his adequate measure. But the artist used to say the best thing he could say of himself was that he had won the confidence of a man like Lewis Dunbar.

Plainly, then, Hillyer was privileged to say: "I can't be a half bad fellow."

Who can tell whether this pardonable display of self-approval was not his support in the artist's woo-

ing of Grace Dunbar? Hillyer could never make up his mind how it happened that he was in the mood to woo. He knew that fondness for the daughter was a plant of slow growth, whereas for the father he had taken a strong liking at the outset. He often flattered himself he had a strong affinity for things natural. Bananas ripened by the sea voyage never tasted to him as they did when he had picked them himself on a Cuban plantation. Perhaps that was why he leaned with so much reliance on his judgment of the father; perhaps the convent maid had attracted him in the same way.

It was true, at all events, he had crossed the ocean to see if she would have him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE RIGHT MAN."

DUNBAR had been accusing himself during the summer of high crimes and misdemeanours. In his own mind he was fearful lest his pursuit of gain on the race-track had put his daughter into second place, and, it cannot be denied, Crazy Jane had at least divided his interest. He said so himself, in a later fit of self-condemnation, but smoothed the way to an excuse by saying that if he was to blame at all it was in having parted with Grace for so long a time. It is not likely, had she remained in Brooklyn, her father would have seen her more frequently, but the feeling that between them stretched the boundless waste of the Atlantic oppressed him whenever his mind reverted to the subject. There can be no doubt, the new propensity for the turf he had developed sprang as much from a desire to think of something beside his state of parental isolation as from the undue excitement of his sporting blood. Then Crazy Jane had been a moneymaker on the track, and that was a most

important consideration, as it meant better provision for the girl. Eminently practical as Dunbar was in most affairs, it never occurred to him that there was a contingency other than one imperatively demanding of him the acquirement of a substantial competency for Grace's use. This obligation to accumulate wealth was an impression of his later life, and therefore, as always happens in such cases, was the potent impulse of his daily work, his ceaseless effort.

Dunbar thought he had planned for a final stroke in the racing campaign a demonstration of Crazy Jane's gait that would be the sensation of the turf. It was to make him a winning, too, that would secure the future of his daughter. With singular foresight, he had been building to the *coup*, as week after week he had raced his mare against the four or five horses to which the sporting world was looking for startling performances. The fastest record for a mile in harness had dropped by fractions of a second to a point that seemed phenomenal. Crazy Jane had been in this lively company throughout the summer, but while showing wonderful speed by fits and starts, was finally given up as a bad job by the talent, who said she was a freak, not a trotter. She had no winning

qualities, they said ; no speed of her own ; nothing but an ambition to trail a fast one ; a forced gait that would fail her if she tried to lead. Once in every generation, the racing wiseacres said, a horse of this kind came from no one knew where and went no one cared where. They had their prototypes, these dung-hill wonders, in the urchin prodigies who played violins and accomplished other marvellous things at tender ages, and then—presto change!—disappeared off the face of the earth. In this estimate of the capacity of the bob-tail mare with the blind eye the talent were right, but in not giving credit to her owner for knowing as much, they were wrong, grievously wrong.

It was these matters Dunbar was meditating one day toward the end of August when there was forwarded to him from Salina a letter from the young artist. It was just a line or two to say their party would sail for home on a day they fixed in September. Hillyer added that he hoped Crazy Jane would hold out until then, as he supposed she would be entered at the fall meeting at Brooklyn. He would really like to see, he wrote, what the nag was like, as the newspapers seemed mystified to class her. Dunbar was particularly well pleased to have this news, as he had planned to date Crazy Jane's fame

from that very meeting. To have Hillyer with him would be a genuine boon. He worded his delight in this way :

"I want a side pardner. The Pro-fessor will be just the cheese. He'll come a stranger and he'll take 'em in."

This he said to himself, of course, for he was keeping dark so far as his racing plans were involved. Away from them he walked in the broad glare of the noonday sun. He was a very happy man. It seemed as if Grace was already returning, not a fact, but an illusion he clung to as a fact. He was beginning to say it was not a positive necessity she should marry, so long as there were means to make whatever provision for her she desired. Hillyer was not a father and did not have a father's feelings. They might go to New York and live together, father and daughter, Dunbar argued, if she came home as fond of him as she went away. Once again he felt her kisses on his cheek as she had said farewell on the ship. If he was sure Grace would not be ashamed of him, very sure, the future could take care of itself. Even Hillyer had said Grace worshipped him as a father.

"I won't let 'em stack the cards on me, no sir-ee," Dunbar murmured more than once when think-

ing the matter over. He was repeating the remark this day, when a telegraph messenger handed him an envelope marked "Cable Message."

This is what he read :

Paris, Aug. 28.

LEWIS DUNBAR, Salina, (N. Y.)

(Forwarded to Springfield.)

Have found right man. Answer Paris.

HILLYER.

"Whoopee !" ejaculated the owner of Crazy Jane with so much vehemence that the startled messenger dropped his book in a cuspidor. Dunbar paid the forwarding charges and threw in a generous gratuity.

"Never knew I jabbered French be-fore," Dunbar remarked to the boy, "but you saw me do it, didn't you, sonny?"

"Yes, sir," the messenger replied. "I knew it was from Paris, for they said it was, and had cost a lot of money to send—nine or ten dollars, they said."

"Well, it's wuth it, every cent of it, don't you forget that," Dunbar said. This to the boy: "Can you telegraph back for me?"

"I can't, but they'll do it over to the office."

"You bet they will," Dunbar went on, "and

they'll grease the wires with tallow to make the thing speedier. I'll pay the shot—you tell 'em that, and I'll be over right away."

It was an hour later before Dunbar made his way to the telegraph office with what might be called a rough draft of a despatch to Paris. In its preparation he had struggled alike with the resources of the English language and the natural emotions of a father. As far as he could remember he had never been so much unstrung. He had been in tight places hundreds and hundreds of times; he had extricated himself from them "without turning a hair;" but here he was trying to indite a telegram at an expenditure of mental force and vital energy compared to which his most exciting experiences on the Mississippi were as boy's play. When, at last, he handed to the clerk at the telegraph office the despatch as he had written it, he was informed its transmission would cost \$57.

"Guess again, I've got a bigger roll," Dunbar cried as he hurriedly replaced a wisp of greenbacks in his waistcoat pocket, and thrust his hand inside the same garment and drawing forth a thick package of bills, banged it down on the counter.

Dunbar, though nonplussed by the excessive charge, would have paid it, had not the clerk volun-

teered to revise the wording of the despatch in a way to preserve its meaning, but curtail its cost, an offer Dunbar accepted. It was his first employment of the Atlantic cable. True he had once worn for a watch charm a cross-section of braided wires supposed to have been cut from the submarine telegraph, and could have repeated if asked to do so, the song, "How Cyrus Laid the Cable," which had been on everybody's lips in celebration of Field's triumph.

The answer to Hillyer's message, as finally prepared to Dunbar's satisfaction, was couched in these words :

Springfield, Mass., Aug. 28.

ROBERT HILLYER, Paris.

All right. What's his name, etc. Answer Springfield.

DUNBAR.

It needed a little persuasion on the part of the clerk to convince Dunbar that the "etc." comprehended the list of inquiries he had included in the original draft of the telegram. He had written "where does he live?" and "what does he do for a living?" and "how old is he?" and "does your mother say he is all right?" Dunbar might have

insisted on the preservation of his phraseology in the main had not it been made clear to him that an answer by cable would put his correspondent in Paris to an outlay of sixty or seventy dollars. Dunbar suggested prepayment of the return message, but this was not feasible, so the abbreviated form went buzzing under the sea.

Dunbar had time to sleep on the turn of affairs in his life. The night brought no response, and he was so taken up with the episode that he entirely forgot his promise to visit the stable where his mare was housed in order to talk with the indispensable Jasper Jackson. Jackson would not trust the horse out of his sight. He slept with Crazy Jane and ate with Crazy Jane like the faithful dog he was.

"That nigger's got a snow-white heart," was what the owner of Crazy Jane said of his man. "And the way Crazy Jane takes to him shows the mare's colour blind in the only peeper she's got."

The fact, as already stated, that Dunbar had time to sleep on what had happened in Paris, does not necessarily imply that he indulged in anything resembling soporific contemplation. Truth to tell, he tossed restlessly for a protracted period of the night on an uneasy pillow. He had believed there would have been ample protection against possible peril

to Grace's future in the artist's pledge of interest. Yet he found himself in an agony of doubt. As far as it had been from his thoughts ever to assert his right of supervision in such a matter, and as little as had been the hope, even, that Grace would have been governed by his wishes, he wondered if he had not done wrong in allowing her to stray beyond his guiding hand. As incompetent as he felt himself to be, if he were seriously to exercise the usual prerogatives of a parent, yet there was a feeling around his heart that told him he, more than any other, no matter how dear, should stand at her side at this juncture of her life. It was a feeling, he knew, that had been growing stronger and stronger within his breast. At times he actually made an effort to resist its controlling power, fearing it might undermine the sturdy, rougher manhood of which he was conscious he was a type. What had an old sport like him to do with such nonsense? In the old days on the Mississippi he thought himself as callous to the softer emotions as a "wooden Injun." As to hearts, they were merely symbols on the cards he held, valued according to their relation to "the draw."

"The first thing I know," he meditated, "I'll be bringin' my sewin' and stayin' to tea; or pre-haps

be the high-cock-a-lorum in an old folks' concert. Brace up, old man; brace up and have some style about you."

Then he put the question to himself: How should Hillyer know who is the right man? Hillyer was a good fellow, lots of horse-sense and all that, but he was not a father; *he* didn't have *that feeling* around his heart. Dunbar called himself a fool for not asking by cable what Mrs. Hillyer thought of the man, whoever he was. *She* was a mother, and her opinion would be worth something. Dunbar made up his mind that Mrs. Hillyer *should* be asked the first thing in the morning.

The first thing in the morning this message was laid in the anxious father's hand:

PARIS, Aug. 29.

DUNBAR, Springfield, (Mass.)

We want father's blessing.

GRACE AND ROBERT.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN LOVING ARMS.

"If he isn't on that dock to meet me, I'll never speak to him as long as I live—never."

And thus formulating her expectation, a young woman, whose rounded figure fell naturally into a graceful pose at the taffrail of the incoming ship, strained her eyes toward the miles of dwarfish buildings on the river front as if she hoped to conjure the object in her mind's eye out of the very depths of the vista by the sheer force of optical concentration.

Grace Dunbar was obviously the center of that little group on the forward deck. Others there were who peered as longingly toward the shore line, but on the spot where Grace stood radiantly happy beside her friends, there seemed to fall a gleam of sunshine exactly according with the frame of mind she was in. Something in particular was being reserved, it would appear, for the young lovers. Mrs. Hillyer and the Hillyer girls were, therefore, content to be a part of, but not to take part in, the scene.

Replying to the threat in Grace's ejaculation, Robert Hillyer said :

"But he may have missed the train, or have been detained by business, or have overslept ; and yet you propose to punish your own father as never father was punished before—you are never going to speak to him. Now as for me, I have faith in Uncle Lew ; he'll—"

"You called him father in the cable despatch, Robert," broke in the girl, with a deprecating shrug of the shoulders.

"I fear, sweetheart, he'll always be Uncle Lew to me, even were he ten thousand times my father-in-law. It's going to be a hard task acquiring the new habit. You know he's Uncle Lew all through the book."

"I don't know anything about your book, sir," was Grace's reply, "and I've a good mind to make you—mind, *make* you—let me see it before it's too late. How do I know what you are going to say in your book about the dearest, the best and the kindest father that ever lived ?"

"I'm all eyes for the crown jewels and the beaver hat," Hillyer said. "They're the beacon to steer by."

Crown jewels and beaver hat were both in bold

relief when, a half hour later, the ship was warped to her moorings. But the luster of one and the sleekness of the other paled before the kindly light of parental love which illumined the rugged face of Lewis Dunbar. This light of genial joy was effulgent when Dunbar held Grace in his arms, as he did for a moment after the party landed. Even before he released her from the embrace, his hand was outstretched to grasp that of his young friend. It was a grip of steel, but warm to the touch, and the one glance he threw from the entranced face of the girl into the open gaze of the man, told of the happiness that was in the father's heart. There was nothing more to be said. No emphasis was imparted to the scene by the almost impulsive movement which passed Grace fairly within the curve of Hillyer's extended arm. Words he had none, though Grace showered her father with endearing speeches, and he was equally dumb when he shook hands with Mrs. Hillyer and her daughters.

Mrs. Hillyer was most urgent in her invitation to Dunbar that he should dine with them all that evening, and to the artist's surprise, as well as gratification, the invitation was accepted. It was the first time Grace's father had broken bread with the Hillyers, and the gracious hostess was not alto-

gether at her ease, as her aggravating son warned her of the epicurean fastidiousness of her guest. Mrs. Hillyer was told that whatever shortcomings it might be possible to detect in Dunbar's ways, his appreciation of good cookery could not be matched by many of the men who assumed to make high living a specialty. Mrs. Hillyer was extremely fearful, therefore, that she had done herself a gross injustice as a housekeeper by asking a gourmet to her board to dine in a household obviously disorganized by the long absence of its head. But the good lady might have spared herself concern on account of the delicacy of Dunbar's palate. The roast might have been overdone, and the claret as muddy as a ditch pool, for all of him that night.

Grace had so much to tell, and her father was so bent on hearing it, that nothing else was in order. A thousand times, or so, the rapture of the girl over what she had seen ended in acknowledgments of what Mrs. Hillyer and her daughters had done for her, and to these bursts of gratitude Dunbar made solemn bows around the circle, for utter lack of words to fit the occasion.

If anything was wanting to make Dunbar irrepressibly happy it was Mrs. Hillyer's announcement that it had been agreed, provided he consented,

that Grace was to remain with them until the wedding, when she was to be installed in her own home, the quest of which was to begin at once.

"You'll notice, Uncle Lew, I don't propose to let Grace out of sight," Hillyer remarked. "I don't propose to lose her."

"I only wish you wouldn't consent at all, papa dear," Grace said, "for I think it an imposition, a perfect imposition. I can't see why I can't go back to Salina with papa and wait until—until the time. There now, don't laugh, Robert, or I'll go anyway, no matter what papa says. If he won't take me—" and by this time the girl was at the back of her father's chair with her arms about his neck—"if he won't take me, I can go back to the convent."

"And like the ladies in the Middle Age romances immure yourself in a cloister until a gallant knight on a milk-white horse comes along to rescue you!" Hillyer remarked with mock gravity.

Suffice it to say that Dunbar fell in with the better plan, as Hillyer, the chief conspirator in the plot, knew he would. What Dunbar would have said, had his tongue been as ready as usual, the artist said for him, namely, that it would be foolish to cover a contingency that must of necessity be of

such brief duration; that Dunbar had business which took him away from Salina a large part of the time, and that Brooklyn would be as accessible as Salina when he was moved to parental communion. This argument had prevailed after Dunbar and Hillyer had sat together alone and smoked. The artist had taken his old friend off to drive the argument home. Dunbar had had a sudden inspiration looking to bringing Grace to Salina and providing an ante-nuptial refuge for her and him at the Salina House. It was only an inspiration; not a conclusion.

And over their cigars Dunbar had unfolded to Hillyer what he had planned to do as a finishing touch to Crazy Jane's racing campaign.

"I haven't been stubbin' round the country for nuthin' this summer, my boy, not by a long shot."

Dunbar was holding in his hands a little book with a red cover, the pages of which were scrawled full of awkward figures.

"I'm about \$15,000 ahead of the game at this minute," he said, "and there's blood on the face of the moon. The little mare's been humpin' along in her own pe-culiar way all summer, and the cooniest of 'em haven't guessed her right yet. There's only two men on earth who knows what she can do,

that's me and Jasper Jackson—he's the nigger who drives her, and he's a white black man. Trust him? You bet your boots I do, I'm makin' no mistakes of that kind. Well, as I was sayin' when the wind blew down the barn, Crazy Jane pushed clean down to her limit, can clip it off between wire and wire in 2:17, maybe splittin' a second one side or t'other of this mark. We've never sent her for all she's wuth but twice this summer, and 'twasn't when anybody was snoopin' to put a clock on us. Now, look-a-here, 2:18 1-2 is the re-cord in this race—you know that—and Gen. Palmer's the horse that's done the trick. My mare forced the big geldin' down to that figger at Hartford a month ago, and jogged in jest in time to get third money. We played possum with the geldin' all along, but wanted to see what she was made of jest for greens. Maybe—but I don't think it—Palmer can do a mite better, perhaps—let me—see—say 2:18, or 2:17 3-4. At Hartford he was the wust tuckered race-horse I ever set eyes on after we laid into him. They licked him down the stretch till he was as sore as a felon on a thumb, and lathered like a barber's brush. Next day they didn't trot him. See what I'm drivin' at?"

"Driving to win something, I dare say," re-

sponded Hillyer, who was nevertheless still a candidate for further enlightenment.

"Now, my boy, I'll lift the lid and let you see what's in the box," said Dunbar, continuing. "Sam Baldwin, who owns Palmer, is covetin' some of the rhino I've been layin' hands on, and he's got the notion in his head I'm off a farm in the neighbourhood of Green's Corners. He's been feelin' of me for weeks, wantin' to make a race, and I ra-ther guess I'm his oyster. You see he thinks I think I've got a wonder, and as I would be puttin' up other folks's money, is dead set on landin' me t'other side of Jordan. I've given the boys a nice idee I'm game, and if I once got goin' would blow in everythin' on the pantry-shelf—even the crown jewels. And I shouldn't be surprised if he'd taken your Uncle Lew's measure. Now, my boy, I've jest come over in an emigrant ship, and about 'nough of a greenhorn to make the match—that is, if he'll make the ante wuth talkin' about. Don't think I'm walkin' in my sleep, my boy, when I whisper in your ear that Crazy Jane can outfoot Palmer for marbles or dollars, and that's a spec-u-lation I'm goin' to chip in my pile to close up. I've got Baldwin keyed up by sayin', so's he could hear it, Crazy Jane can drop the distance flag on his

geldin'. Baldwin's let me win second money four or five times, he thinks, when fust went to some one else, jest to whet my appe-tite. And I'm gettin' kind o' hungry, I don't mind sayin'."

"But suppose this horse Palmer can trot faster than 2:17, then what?" asked Hillyer.

"Then Baldwin's the top of the heap, my boy, the top of the heap, and the house I'm goin' to buy my gal won't be as good as she ought to have."

"O, come now, Uncle Lew, I won't have that, you know," Hillyer was in haste to say. "I'm going to buy the house; it may be a plain one, but I intend to pay for it."

"I can't stop you buyin' a house any more'n you can stop me, my boy, and let's say we'll keep hands off. It's my money I'm goin' to let go of."

"It's yours, Uncle Lew, if Baldwin doesn't get hold of it," Hillyer put in with a laugh and a chuckle.

"He's welcome if he gets it," Dunbar said, "I never squeal."

"You know where you can borrow enough for railroad fare home, Uncle Lew, don't you? Grace and I won't see you suffer."

"All right, my covey, all right. But just put this in your pipe and smoke it:—

“ ‘Keep your money in your pocket,
When you want it then you’ve got it,
When a friend comes ‘round to borrow,
Tell him to call ‘round to-morrer.’ ”

When Dunbar and his young friend returned to the drawing room Crazy Jane was the first subject of conversation.

“What a funny name for a horse,” the younger of the Hillyer girls said.

“You ought to see her,” rejoined Dunbar.

And it was decided that as the mare would come to Brooklyn a fortnight hence for her last appearance, the opportunity should not be missed.

CHAPTER XX.

CRAZY JANE.

JASPER JACKSON'S glossy skin of ebony shone like a polished kettle as he sat, his legs in a sort of grotesque knot, on an upturned grain measure in front of Crazy Jane's stall at the far end of the Brooklyn Fashion Course. The summer had taken on a new lease of life in this first week of September. It was piping hot. On the singed plot of greensward immediately in front of the long row of fancifully painted stalls, each bearing a number in bold characters above its horizontally divided door, were disposed scores of jockeys, horse-rubbers and stablemen, some of Jasper's own complexion, and some presumably of the white races, though their skins showed the ruddy bronze of continual exposure. Face down on the grass, his heels in air, lay one of the craft talking with Lewis Dunbar's driver. Others were stretched out in the narrow shadow of the sheds prone on their backs, and others still, worked lazily at hanging harness or tilted sulky.

Further along, where a huge maple warded off

the glowing sun, boys and men were leading at halters' ends what were really blanketed horses, but which, swathed and girdled from the tips of their ears to their cruppers, looked like palentological specimens come to life again after centuries of burial. At a little distance they appeared to have coats of many colours—green, yellow, red, blue—and to be of extraordinary bulk. Their envelopment hung to their hocks and encased their necks and heads so as to make them look twice their size. Eyes they seemed to have as big and monster-like as the fabled unicorn, where the blankets were provided with peepholes as round and of the circumference of saucers.

"I'm almost afraid of them," Grace Dunbar was saying as she stood with the man of her choice in a group formed, as well, by Dunbar and the Hillyer girls. Grace was looking for the first time on the panolpy of a race-track.

"And I know, Grace, I'll have night-mares for a month," was what Anne Hillyer had said. "They look like what night-mares must be. And isn't it cruel to keep the poor things tied up in blankets in this hot weather? Why do they do it, Mr. Dunbar?"

"A trick of the trade, miss," Dunbar made an-

swer. "Racin' stock's very liable to take cold, and then they won't work. This is a great day for fast work. Keep 'em trottin' when they're sweatin'."

"Do you think Crazy Jane—what a funny name that is—will win?" inquired Beatrice.

"Money talks, miss," said Dunbar, and as the inquirer turned to the artist as if to seek an interpretation to this bit of turf argot, Robert whispered that the owner of Crazy Jane was very sure she would win, or he wouldn't have wagered so much money on the outcome of the event.

"Now, papa, dear," interposed Grace at this juncture, "we all want to see Crazy Jane."

Anticipating this request, Dunbar had led his friends to the stall before which Jasper Jackson was keeping guard.

"Sittin' on the bye all the time," said Dunbar to Hillyer as they drew nigh. "He's true blue, that boy, I can tell you."

What was more, the faithful Jackson was master of the situation, and to the intense disappointment of everybody, he set his face like a storm-cloud against disturbing the mare an hour before she was going to make the trial of her life.

"I don't just like to do it, Mistah Dunbar," was

the way the jockey put it. "She's been feelin' bang up dis h'yre mo'nin' and I hates to discombolate her now. She just went like de ol' debbil hissel' dis mo'nin' when I gives her a tu'n of t'ree miles, to wake her up so she'd see de sun rise ober yender, and I'd ruther not fotch her out. She's so ticklish, misses"—turning to the ladies—"I just hates to. I wouldn't lose dis race for nuthin', not for nuthin'."

"She ain't anything to look at, but I guess you'd better trot out, Jackson; I'll take the chance." Dunbar had caught the sign of disappointment in Grace's eye.

"I ask you pleasingly, Mistah Dunbar, not to make me do it, sah. Of cou'se if you seys so, yo' seys so, but I don' contemplate yo' know what the chance am. My money's up, Mistah Dunbar, and I wants to win 'long with yo', sah."

"I say let Jackson have his way, Uncle Lew," put in Hillyer. "We shall be the better pleased when she comes out sniffing victory from afar."

"That's it, sah," cried Jackson, the whites of his eyes rolling like eggs on a platter, "that's it. Vict'ry from 'far. And if she don' fool dem fellers—fool 'em suah—then this here moke'll stop drivin' race-horses and hire out's a chambermaid in a liv'ry stable."

"The coloured troops fight nobly," Dunbar said in a tone that betrayed his sympathy with his dusky henchman.

And as the ladies instantly withdrew their persuasions Jackson was left bowing his thanks as if he had been done the greatest of favours.

The friends had a good half hour or so to spare before the races were to be called. As they loitered along toward the grand-stand Dunbar informed Hillyer that instead of the side bet on the result of the race being \$5,000 each, the original proposition, Baldwin the night before had proposed doubling it, and the challenge had been accepted. It was expressly stipulated by Baldwin that Crazy Jane was to beat Gen. Palmer three heats in five for place. The bob-tail mare need not win the race, if a better horse than either should show up. It was to be a test between the mare and the gelding.

"But we're goin' to send her to win the race," Dunbar remarked, "if it takes a leg, or four of 'em. It'll bring the mare to her bottom notch, and then maybe I'll sell her, and let some other fellow have the fun. I dreamed last night Baldwin might want her."

"One of your wide-awake dreams, Uncle Lew?" Hillyer inquired.

"Well, I was jest toyin' with Morpheus when I had it."

"And how about the pools? Will you back your horse in them?" was Hillyer's query.

"Till hell freezes over! It's a case of root, hog, or die, my boy."

A few minutes later the artist and his three companions were taking their places in the procession of spectators which had now begun to surge through the main entrance to the grand-stand. It was not expected that Dunbar would remain with them, and he therefore was not obliged to offer any excuse for absenting himself, although Grace urged her father to take any opportunity which offered to find them in their places that they might have the latest news of Crazy Jane's condition.

"Yes," put in Hillyer, "I may want to buy a pool or two, and wouldn't like to get things wrong."

Somewhere from the mysterious depths of the thronged structure in front of them came a strident voice speaking in the jargon of the pool box:

"Gen. Palmer sells for seventy-five, what am I offered for second choice? Yes, sir, this is the 2:18 class. Fifty I'm offered, fifty, fifty, sixty you say, and it's worth it. All done. Sold for sixty. P. G. takes Crazy Jane."

And so on. Hillyer pricked up his ears, and drawing Dunbar off an arm's length, slipped a package of bills into his hands, and said under his breath:

"On Crazy Jane at any odds."

In an instant Dunbar was lost in the crowd. Beatrice Hillyer was looking around for him in vain.

"O, I did want to say to Mr. Dunbar the last thing, I hoped his horse would win."

"So did I," added Anne, "didn't you, dear?"

Grace, to whom this question was addressed, simply said:

"She *will*. My father said so." It came as positively as a judicial decree.

"I wish I had your confidence, and I'd win a million to-day," Hillyer rejoined. "If Uncle Lew was to do the trotting I'd back him for all there is in the bank, but horses are horses."

By this time the party were ascending the stairs to the grand-stand, and from under their feet the echoes of the pool-sellers' cries were ringing. It was a jumble of sounds, in a score of vocal keys, not always intelligible, but combining, in such words or phrases as were audible, the names of horses and stated wagers. It was the more like Bedlam let

loose because it seemed to come from the bowels of the earth.

"There," said Hillyer, "Crazy Jane's the favourite. Listen!"

But as the artist and the others under his escort were pushed rudely along up the steps, the riot of noises was more incomprehensible and listening was a futile effort. Into their ears was being bellowed the fact that programmes of the day's races, giving descriptions of the horses, their official numbers and their records on the track, were for sale; ushers were shouting the directions to seats, vendors were selling lemonade, and separated spectators were trying vainly to resist the impact of the multitude by sheer force of lung power. In this hurry and flurry the four friends found their places in an eligible location among thousands of others, sweltering like themselves under the scorching heat of the afternoon. It was the everyday spectacle of an American race-track.

A band stationed in a pagoda at the opposite side of the track had come to the end of a Strauss waltz. Again the lingo of the gamesters down below lifted itself above the counter tumult. Dozens of other names than Crazy Jane's and Gen. Palmer's were dimly heard.

"Now listen," Hillyer almost shouted. "They're selling the 2 : 18 race."

The betting was in favour of the bob-tail mare.

"Her owner is buying Crazy Jane, and he ought to know," the pool seller was saying. "A hundred dollars in the pool, and how much for second choice? Seventy-five, seventy-five, seventy-five, and sold to—"

A burst of applause had gone up from the grandstand at sight of a famous trotter which had come at a jog into view. Another and another and another joined the first at the judges' stand. The drivers were dismounting from between the spider-webbed wheels of their sulkies, and with the cushions from their seats, were weighing in. Hillyer had been to the races before, and he explained this part of the picture. Coming from invisible openings the space in front of the judges' stand was quickly peopled by slouching fellows carrying buckets and sponges, and bearing over their shoulders or on their arms soft blankets, which they made haste to throw over the horses' backs while the weighing proceeded. Most of them sopped dripping sponges in the horses' mouths, and rinsed out their distended nostrils.

The great ellipse of whitened sand which lay

stretched out under the eye was now resounding to the patter of quick-flying feet. The entries for the first event of the day were scoring for the start. From beneath the canopy of the grand-stand the arena looked as splendid as a masterpiece in oil. At first it was a panorama, all motion and life in every element save the landscape ; then as if by magic the clang of a bell set nearly every human figure in it as rigid as if it had undergone a galvanic shock. Craning necks in the grand-stand, tiptoeing fringes of men at the fences, attent beings everywhere ! Only the fidgetty horses and an occasional laggard spectator seemed to escape the mighty force which transformed life into a quietude like death.

The races had begun.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RACE.

IT was a rare day's sport the horsemen were having, even though the cracks of the turf marshalled for contest in the 2:18 class were still in the stables. The heats in the three races on the card were being trotted alternately, bringing Crazy Jane and Gen. Palmer to the score last of all.

"It's over so soon," Grace complained after both heats preceding. She was beginning to understand why men took headlong leaps to ruin on the race-track. Yet she winced a little to see women about her making wagers with no regard for the publicity of their surroundings.

Not until the call had come from the judges' bell for the event of the day did the artist or his companions, though they scanned the quarter-stretch like sharp-shooters, catch sight of the owner of Crazy Jane.

"Perhaps he's lost the crown jewels, lady-love," whispered Hillyer to Grace, "so keep your eye out for the beaver hat."

Anon it was spied. The uncommon man who wore it was coming from the direction of the stables, and though stopped a score of times after he was in front of the grand-stand, was showing as much expedition as possible in finding a place to stand at the fence. It was observed that there was a disposition to give him room, and the open sesame was his announcement that he owned one of the entries.

Five of the original six entries for the 2:18 class responded to the summons—Crazy Jane, Gen. Palmer, Hortense, Walkill Belle and Swiftwing. The four first named had been through the circuit in this class, and Swiftwing, the newcomer, was a Hambletonian-bred mare, with a reputed gait of a shade better than 2:22 in private. The best she had done in public was to get a mark of 2:24 a week before. An equine quidnunc on the grand-stand, who gave this information, remarked that Swiftwing was little better than a colt and was in this race only for experience.

Jasper Jackson was the only negro up behind a horse in this race, so that identification of the bob-tail propounded no problem to the little party in the grand-stand. Crazy Jane came on the track with the rest of the entries in her class. There was a cheer for the cracks as they jogged to and fro while the

drivers were taking turns on the scales, but on the part of Hillyer and the girls it was a perfunctory demonstration, half-hearted, short-lived. Crazy Jane too closely resembled a cotton-tailed rabbit between thills to excite a high degree of enthusiasm. By comparison the other horses in the race looked like steeds from a royal equerry.

The horses were now in motion, scoring for the word, in these positions: Walkill Belle at the pole, Gen. Palmer second, Crazy Jane third, Hortense fourth and Swiftwing fifth. No one who knew a surcingle from a soup ladle needed to be told the race was the bob-tail against the field. There was not a driver in sight who was not bent on badgering the little mare. Jackson had wheeled in to the fence the first time he went back for a start, and it could be seen with half an eye, the mare had recognised her owner. With her head perked to one side, to keep her good eye straight before her, the recognition was as marked as if she had winked at Dunbar. But it seemed undeniably comic to count on this horse beating the kings and queens of the turf.

Hillyer almost wished he had his money back. But he took heart later on, when in the first heat Crazy Jane finished second ahead of Gen. Palmer, the winner of the heat being Walkill Belle, who

was on hand with the superb stride of her noble ancestor. The heat had been utterly barren of features. Even the pace was slow. Disappointment would have reigned had not the people had something to laugh at. Crazy Jane was the butt of popular ridicule.

"See her paw!" was an outcry that described her hippity-hop of a gait.


Scores of scoffing voices took up the cry:

"See her paw!"

Grace felt hurt, and was expressing herself in peppery fashion when her attention and that of her companions was caught by her father, who was standing in a temporarily open space holding up one finger of his right hand as if signalling with a semaphore.

"He means he's beaten Gen. Palmer the first trick—or heat," Hillyer said, interpreting the sign. Then Dunbar was beckoned to come up, and he was soon elbowing his way to where they sat.

"So far so good," he said in reply to the artist's question as to how things were going. "Jest sparrin' for wind, you see; jest feelin' our way. I rather guess Baldwin thinks he gave me that heat. Wants to string the old man. Walkill won, take notice, in 2:20½. Any of us can beat that, even that young-



ster Swiftwing, I reckon. Baldwin'd like to coax me up to the edge of the pre-cipice and then tip me over into the pool box. You ought to see his stool-pigeons buzzin' 'round the money coffers while he's doing the Sunday school act over in the green lots."

All of which was Chaldean to his friends. Even Hillyer shook his head demurely when, after Dunbar's departure, his younger sister asked, *sotto voce*, what was that Mr. Dunbar had said.

Then the gentleman who was so familiar with Swiftwing's pedigree returned to his seat from a trip to the betting ring, and in the hearing of every one within thrice the length of his arm proclaimed that Crazy Jane and Gen. Palmer were racing for a side bet of \$10,000! The news spread over the grandstand in a twinkling, with the result that from that moment the other contests took minor place. As Grace did not know what a side bet was, nor that her father had made one, she thought no more of the announcement than if she had heard Crazy Jane was going to have an extra peck of oats for winning.

But she felt that new interest had been aroused in the bob-tail mare, and that a lot of people must be very sorry they laughed at the horse earlier in

the day. Plaudits were about equally divided between the mare and the gelding when they came out for the second heat. Dunbar was at his station next the fence, and as the five horses tried over and over again for a start, he was observed several times coaching his driver. It was a dreary process, this scoring down, and as unpractised as his eye was in such matters Hillyer could see the bob-tail was getting a bit restless. Here and there on the grand-stand, and on the quarter-stretch as well, there were cries of "Fine him! Fine him!" Horsemen could see the false starts were being needlessly prolonged, and the gentleman who knew all about Swiftwing laid the blame on Gen. Palmer's driver.

"Palmer won't let Crazy Jane into second place where she belongs," he shouted. "See him get ahead of her to crowd her over! There! Darned if all of 'em aren't in it. Here they come! It's a go! O, but Crazy Jane gets the worst of that send-off."

The bell which had been ringing to turn the bunch back was at last silent. The horses were away in a cloud of dust. Walkill's scion was leading, followed at close quarters by Gen. Palmer and Crazy Jane, the others trailing at the rear. Almost without variation this order of progress was main-

tained to the pole marking three-quarters of a mile, when Walkill Belle and Gen. Palmer changed places, a manœuvre which seemed literally to thrust the bob-tail forward, for in a period no longer than a look she was swaying around the turn to the stretch with her good eye almost glued to the back of the gelding's driver. If they had been tied together they could not have travelled at a pace more even. Gen. Palmer was moving like a machine, every foot fall as measured as the strokes of a piston rod, while plunging forward came Crazy Jane, the thunder of her hoofs loud enough to be heard above the now excited yells and cheers of the crowd. The gelding had claimed the lead, but had not been able to swing into the pole, so that as soon as the bob-tail began to inch to the fore, as she did on the straight-away, there was a berth for her inside. She had taken it, almost lunging forward as Jackson brought his hands down on her haunches, still holding the reins taut, and apparently *pushing* his horse as he scrouched in his seat and laid his cheek flat on her back. That instant Gen. Palmer's driver, beating about him with his whip, caught the bob-tail in the face with a vicious fillip and up she went off her feet.

"It looked to be all day with her then," said

Dunbar after the struggle, "but when I hollered in her ear as she went by, you saw what she did. You saw it, didn't you?"

What she did, it is to be recorded, was to head Gen. Palmer a winner to the wire for the first time in her life. And she did it in 2:18. What Dunbar shouted was not cabalistic, after all, but it levelled the rearing horse, as it had done time and time again.

"Jig along, Jane," were the simple words, but they were potent, and with them ten thousand throats, in a wild roar, greeted the winner of the most sensational of races before the day was done.

After this heat, had Dunbar been guided by aught else but his own judgment, he would have protested the effort of Gen. Palmer's driver to defeat Crazy Jane by foul means, and a score of witnesses of the trick came forward to say they would support the protest.

"I'm all hunki-dori," was Dunbar's reply as he mopped his forehead with a red bandana, "I'm all hunki-dori, and as for the mare, she'll do her own protestin'. She's shied her castor in the ring and'll fight."

As he looked up into the grand-stand, he saw Hillyer and all three girls on their feet, waving their

hands in an apparent frenzy of delight. This time, with a grim smile on his lips, he held up two fingers of his right hand, and turning walked with Jackson up the track behind his blanketed trotter.

To owner and jockey the interim was all too short, but to the expectant throngs it seemed ages before the third heat was called. A hoarse din of voices was now proceeding from the region of the pool-sellers' stands. People on the lower tiers of seats on the grand-stand leaned far out to see what they could see. It was a mass of excited men, from whose faces the perspiration streamed, and out of whose mouths there poured frantic demands for the record of their bets. There was no choice of favourite, Crazy Jane and Gen. Palmer being named at even figures, in pools which piled up to vast totals in deposits of from one to five hundred dollars every minute or two. There were no pools on the other events. They had been forgotten.

By virtue of her victory Crazy Jane was the pole horse in this heat, but her honest title was disputed by every device of jockeyism, as time and time again the five contestants scored for the start. Defiance of the law of the turf became so flagrant that a warning was issued by the judges that no horse was to head Crazy Jane to the starting point.

Walkill Belle was guilty of that offense the next time down, and her driver was unseated in favour of the judges' choice. Down they came again strung out like a funeral. No go. Next time there was a huddle of horses and sulkies, and as they flew down with Gen. Palmer a half length in front of Crazy Jane, fifty voices almost in unison raised the cry that the bob-tail was in a pocket. The bell sent them back, as Walkill Belle's new driver was lagging too far behind. As he passed Dunbar going up he almost halted at the fence to say:

"Old man, they're bound to beat you, and they'll kill that nigger of your'n if they have to."

Dunbar had not mistaken the villanous purpose of his opponents, and fearful that the waiting game was dangerous, he elbowed his way out of his place, and running up the stretch ordered Jackson to nod for the word the next time. As all the drivers heard the instructions, they struggled for the advantage of a lead, and rushed their horses down abreast, so manœuvring when they wheeled to score that Crazy Jane was blocked for a second or two. The consequence was that Jackson, yielding the right of the pole horse to fix the pace at the start, looked up at the judges and took the word "Go" in the dust of all the rest.

"She's got the right of way," Dunbar half murmured to himself as he took off his coat and hung it over a picket, "and they'll have to trot all-fired fast to get home fust."

They *were* trotting all-fired fast; Gen. Palmer as fast as the best, but not fast enough to take the pole from the bob-tail. The gelding had still a shade the best of it as the pack came broadside to on the back-stretch, where the least variation in position was discernible. In a bunch close to the leaders the other three horses were spinning along as if in leading strings. Crazy Jane was going no faster than was necessary to hold the inside, a fact that stuck out when Gen. Palmer on the further turn checked his gait perceptibly as if to allow Swift-wing, the next in order, to draw up, bringing her on even terms with Crazy Jane.

"Palmer's busted!" yelled somebody.

"Is he?" came a responsive exclamation.
"You'll see if he is."

Other comments by the hundred rent the air, which was quivering with the suppressed excitement of those who could not speak.

Up near the distance flag where Dunbar stood in his coat-sleeves was a group of stable attendants, who were vociferously predicting the triumph of the gelding.

"She'll cut loose by and by," the owner of Crazy Jane said. "By and by, by and by, by and by."

It was as if by some occult power these words drew the mare on, for that terrific sprawl of hers lengthened by degrees, and she was literally tearing her way to the opening of the stretch like a demoniac thing. At the last turn of the track a curtain of dust rose through which it looked as if a great ball was bounding propelled by a mighty bowler. All five of the straining beasts were seemingly rolled into one, they came on in such close formation. A shudder went through the whole concourse of onlookers lest a single misstep, a swerve to the right or left, should throw the compact mass of horses, men and sulkies into a carnival of death. In an oppressive hush, an instant later, could be heard the ominous sound of splintered wood, of grating iron, and what could be made out in the crush were three or four teetering sulkies in which drivers were trying to keep their seats.

"Great God!" a man cried in ringing tones, "they'll all be killed!"

It looked as if this was prophecy.

"The bob-tail's upset," shouted another voice. "She's got no driver!"

"Where's the nigger? Poor devil, he'll be ground

to powder." This from another possessor of quick eyes, and a volley of exclamations like it, told the tale. Women held their hands before their faces as if they expected to be spattered with Jackson's blood.

Look! Ripping her pathway through the battle-line Crazy Jane was at the fore. Her sulky was riding on one wheel as she came driverless on. It was an uncanny sight, for every bad point in the mare seemed to have been exaggerated a thousand-fold. The infernal regions might have claimed her in this mad plunge toward the goal. She was running like a Kentucky thoroughbred.

A great shout like a salvo of artillery went up.

Every eye strained to see what was happening. Vision failed. All anybody saw was a coatless man vaulting from behind into the sulky seat, and with his hands gripping the breeching straps, resting half the weight of his body on the mare's back, as she quickly recovered her gait and finished the heat in prescribed form to a yell repeated at every stride: "Jig along, Jane! Jig along, Jane!"

Crazy Jane was the winner of the heat by a good two lengths ahead of everybody save Walkill Belle, who, far out at one side, was a close second. Rushing in behind were the vicious crew, the enormity

of whose crime in seeking to eke out speed with reckless jockeyism dawned on the people soon enough to create a stemless tide of protest. Disapproval of resort to fraud was screamed and yelled, and as the foaming winner was led back to the judges' stand, her reins still dragging, a storm of applause broke over the scene that split the dome of heaven.

Dunbar, it was, who sat in Jackson's place, and obedient to the judges' nod he dismounted from his sulky with a cigar wedged fast in the corner of his mouth. For him, too, there was another, and still another outburst. His rivals were now on their feet in front of the judges, and clamouring for their rights.

"Jig along, Jane!" cried a stentorian voice on the grand-stand, and at the word, a chorus of ten thousand took up the phrase in sing-song and drowned out every sound hostile to it. Excited men were shouting "No heat!" and the names of the various horses, but no one heard them. The judges were standing at their posts with their heads together as if in council. Owners were wildly gesticulating with their drivers. The chorus was still "Jig along, Jane!" It broke for a moment, but not much longer, when a grime-covered negro hobbled

down the track with a gash in his cheek that stained his jacket red. Dunbar said not a word except to his driver, whom he took about the waist and helped to a resting place under the grand-stand.

"Jig along, Jane!" was still the cry when the judges' stand hung out a card awarding the heat to Crazy Jane in 2:17 1-2, and second place to Walkill Belle. It became known presently that Gen. Palmer, Hortense and Swiftwing had been ruled off for attempting to defeat the bob-tail mare by locking her sulky wheels.

The race was over, for the fourth and deciding heat was trotted alone by Crazy Jane and Walkill Belle, the bob-tail winning after a spirited dash with Dunbar himself in the sulky. As he jogged toward the sheds, to the chorus renewed of "Jig along, Jane!" he turned around in his seat and waved his hand.

Only four people saw that he was holding four fingers out straight.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN AFTER YEARS.

THE flight of time has rushed the world onward many years, to a day in early summer. The years intervening have not passed without leaving their marks on history's pages; wars have stained them with blood; progress has set down a new decalogue of political and commercial life; invention has swept off the record the best which had gone before; nations and men acknowledge new allegiances; ceaseless, tireless, relentless change has been the order of the age. Yet there are people foolish enough to imagine the sun stands still for a little time on this day in early summer that the glory of its meridian may longer rest on a piece of rolling meadowland on Staten Island where a grave has been dug for nothing better than the carcass of a horse. To be sure, this animal was of no common clay. If there is a newspaper in the country which has not chronicled the horse's death, and in proper terms saluted its memory, that newspaper is out of fashion, sadly, perversely, culpably out of fashion.

Crazy Jane is no more, and Staten Island is paying her homage. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hillyer said afterward they never comprehended what loyalty in a neighbourhood really was until then. Everybody knew the bob-tail it is true—her history had followed her from the race-track—but the old hobbledehoy of a beast had been drawing the family phaeton so long, and at such a respectable pace, that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hillyer would be the last people in the world to think of anybody remembering that Crazy Jane ever went a mile in 2:17 1-2 and had beaten the world's record. It was, in fact, for what she was yesterday, not for what she had been in years gone by, that they grieved to have her die, even though her dying had been a merciful ending of a life it had been their serious aim to prolong. A mile in 2:17 1-2 had been totally eclipsed in these after-years. The world has been rushing onward, onward, onward into the electric age, in which pulses and footfalls, as well as driving wheels, move in response to a new and inexplicable energy.

"She always could jig along some," was what Lewis Dunbar said the night before, and "She always could jig along some" is the epitaph to be found above her grave to this day.

It is the death of Crazy Jane which has brought

Dunbar to Staten Island this early summer day weeks in advance of his customary arrival from Salina for a fortnight's stay with Robert and Grace. The youngsters who call him grandfather have prattled the fiction about trading for a cutter and getting a race-horse to every willing ear on the island, a romance that usually turns the edge of juvenile ridicule, for it may be said that Crazy Jane did not grow more lovely to look upon as she aged. With common accord the children of the Hillyer household had grown to love the bob-tail better than the choice of the stable. More than once they had come running to their mother, their eyes streaming with tears, to recount how a heartless playmate had said an unkind thing of the old horse.

Their eyes again tell their tale of woe as Crazy Jane goes under the sod on this early summer day. Nor can their elders keep back the tears. They are not ashamed, either, to have their neighbours who bare their heads beside them in the meadow see them in their grief. It is just a little assemblage of friends standing beside a grave. Because it is a horse's grave nothing is said to give the occasion solemnity, but if it is in the heart of more than one there present, to speak, the impulse dies out in the glistening eyes when a white-haired man leads a

curly-headed boy to the edge of the grave that he may drop a June rose upon the lifeless form of Crazy Jane. Against the fence, next the shell road, lean a half dozen men in working clothes, rough fellows as men go, who spare a part of their noon-day respite reverently to watch a burial so strange. A grocer's boy—the noisiest, the loudest-mouthed, the most unruly, that ever cracked a whip—comes down the road, his horse on the run, hurrying home to his dinner. At a sign from the men at the fence, and a word of what is doing over in the meadow, this flagrant disturber of the public peace draws rein, and like the rest, stands still, his red hair blazing in the sun, while Crazy Jane is buried. The grocer's boy knows the bob-tail mare had earned a decent funeral.

After it is over, when the family are alone, the curly-headed boy who is at the knee of the white-haired man lisps this startling question :

“Grandpa, do horses go to heaven when they die? Brother Lewis told me to ask you.”

Whereat a bigger boy, pretending with all his might to be a man, as he stretches his legs apart and sticks his hands deep in his pockets in the conscious importance of nine years of worldly experience, bubbles over with glee at the other end of the

piazza. It is the familiar spectacle of wisdom—self-assertive, confident wisdom in its teens—seeking for and finding a victim in childish innocence. What is a playful prank in youth becomes a factor of success, or of what the world calls success, in real life.

Grandfather knows the trick, none better, for he has been among men who have gone up or gone down in the matching of wits; and he grimly smiles while he reprovingly shakes his finger at the young offender.

But the curly-head wants an answer and the grandfather makes this reply :

“That’s where you’ve got your old gran’-dad where his hair’s short. You see I’ve never been to heaven, but no spot or place’d be heaven to me, without horses.”

“Nor without men who love horses, and treat them kindly,” comes a musical voice from behind a rose-bush just below the rail of the piazza.

“If you don’t let up there, sis, I’ll be takin’ stock in all that they’ve been sayin’ in the papers about ‘yours very truly’ and Crazy Jane,” Lewis Dunbar answers, “and I’m not makin’ pretty faces at myself in the lookin’-glass any more.”

“All the stories, Uncle Lew, except the one that you died some years ago as that Boston paper has

it," Hillyer puts in, having appeared at the doorway in season to catch the drift of the talk for which the mischievous Lewis Dunbar Hillyer has unintentionally given the cue.

"If I'm a dead cock in the pit, my boy, why don't you call the book you're writin' about me 'Born Agin?' How'd that sound?"

"I've got a better title."

"What is it, Robert?" This from behind the rose-bush.

"I've just made up my mind. It's to be 'Your Uncle Lew.'"

THE END.

